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THE WRITINGS OF

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

COMPRISING HIS

NOVELS, TALES, AND LETTERS TO AN UNKNOWN

WITH

An Essay on the Genius and Achievement of the Author

By GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

COMPLETE IN EIGHT VOLUMES

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THE NOVELS, TALES AND LETTERS

OF

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

EDITED BY PROF. GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

COMPLETE IN EIGHT VOLUMES

CARMEN

ARSÈNE GUILLOT

ABBÉ AUBAIN

Translated by

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

With Illustrations by

[illegible] FRAIPONT AND S. ARCO

NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA

FRANK S. HOLBY

MCMVI

Prosper Mérimée.
An etching by Lalauze.

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An etching by Lalauze

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INTRODUCTION

IT is curious that while a great deal has been written, and while much has been written very well, on the personality of the author of *Colomba,* the writers have usually rather shuffled off the duty of thoroughly appraising his literary character and position. Except by a few violent partisans of Republicanism or Romanticism, that position has always been acknowledged to be a very high one, from the time when, nearly eighty years ago, Goethe set his seal upon its patent; but there has been a certain half-heartedness in most of the acknowledgments, and (which is worse), a certain failure to survey the whole subject adequately. Even Mr. Pater's essay, one of the best critical things on Mérimée in any language, is not quite just, and its injustice is due to its inadequacy.

The secret of failure, if failure there has been—and it has been admitted by some of the acutest writers on Mérimée themselves *—is, I

* M. Filon in his *Mérimée et ses Amis* (Paris, 1894), an excellent book, is avowedly and purposely biographical. Taine in his Introduction to the *Inconnue* letters is good, but not adequate ; M. d'Hausson-

think, a tolerably open one. Few people seem to have been able to keep an even hand between the consideration of Mérimée's character as a man and the consideration of his character as an author. Some of them have been so much interested in the former that they have had apparently little or no time or attention to spare for the latter; some have found the man so unsympathetic that they have allowed their disapprobation or distaste to colour and vitiate their appreciation of the literature. Hardly anybody, so far as I know, has unreservedly and methodically used both keys and both lights—the literature to unlock and irradiate the life, the life to illustrate and open the literature.

The difficulty may have been complicated, notwithstanding the passing of a whole generation since his death, by the fact that, except to his most intimate friends (who were few), the living Mérimée was to a very great extent a disguise and travesty of the true man; and that nearly fifty years of persistent, though leisurely, publication left even the literature in a most disastrous need of correction and illumination by that part of it which could not be known in the author's lifetime. A certain power of

ville (Paris, 1888) very one-sided; M. Blazede Bury (*Lettres à une autre Inconnue*) tries too much to be *vif*.

literary divination indeed might have remedied this, and did in a few cases; but literary, like other divination, is not precisely the gift of the man in the street. Even now, when every competent critic admits that the Mérimée of the *Letters* insists on being heard in explanation and justification of the Mérimée who was known as a man before 1870, comparatively few have admitted the testimony in similar rectification of judgments of the writer. It is this task, combined with a thorough critical examination of the whole literary Mérimée, absent from, as well as present, in this new English appearance of his work, that is the purpose of the present Introduction. I hope that readers will not find it too long; I could find it in my own heart to make it very much longer.

Among the uneventful lives of most modern men of letters, Mérimée's is almost distinguished by its exceptional want of distinguished event. Except that he was once put in prison *—a curious experience for a most respectable member of society, a government official of high rank at the time, and before long to be a Senator—and excepting also the tragic circumstance of his death amid the imminent ruin of his country, nothing could possibly be less " accidented " than

* For unguarded language in defending his friend Libri.

his existence. Yet it was very far from monotonous; and even if it had been more so in outward circumstances, it would have been filled with pulse and movement by his activities of brain and (whatever some of his contemporaries may have thought) of heart.

He was born on the 28th of September, 1803 (a date to which he often refers with a semi-Swiftian bitterness) at Paris, of a Norman family; and perhaps it is not fanciful to say that he represents, remarkably enough, one of the types of the rich and varied Norman temperament as it has shown itself on both sides of the Channel. His grandfather had been a lawyer and steward to Marshal Broglie (Carlyle's "Broglie the War God"); his father was a painter with more knowledge than artistic skill, a professor, and an official who acted as a sort of patron to Hazlitt when he visited Paris as an art student, and had travelled much. His father married rather late in life, Anna Moreau, a pupil at a school where he taught. In her Mérimée possessed (what I fancy most free-thinkers themselves would much rather *not* have possessed), a free-thinking mother: and his own parade of infidelity is generally set down to her influence. He was, at any rate, devoted to her, kept her with him after his father's death until

her own, and has been thought by some to have sacrificed to her the only love ("in all good and honour" as his countrymen say) that he ever experienced. However that may be, all tradition and all recorded traits give her out as much more remarkable for cleverness than for amiability. A hackneyed anecdote represents his incurable distrust, and his at least affected contempt, of mankind as due to an occasion when, having been severely rebuked and punished for some childish fault, he overheard his parents laughing at his contrition and dismay. These things are very often forged or overvalued when true; but something external, and something more than that influence of friendship to which we shall come presently, is reasonably wanted to explain the difference between the Mérimée who almost unwillingly, but quite unmistakably, reveals himself in the *Letters,* and the Mérimée who played his part to the world.

The family was not rich, and though in his later years (whether by savings from his income as Senator, or in some other way) Mérimée appears to have accumulated some private fortune, he represents himself earlier as entirely dependent upon his stipend. He had studied law, probably never with any intention to practice, and after the Revolution of 1830, had various

places in various public offices. And he was lucky enough, when he was only twenty-eight, to obtain that of Inspector-General of Historical Monuments, an office of considerable dignity, agreeable and to him, specially congenial in its duties, sufficiently well paid, and perfectly compatible with the devotion of plenty of time to society which he did not dislike, to non-official travel of which he was fond, to those occasional ensconcements at home and in solitude to which, by one of the frequent contrasts in his character, he was passionately devoted, and to literature, of which he soon showed an extraordinary command.

Mérimée was early thrown into contact with the Romantic movement. In later life he was regarded as, affected to be, and in a certain sense was, a kind of deserter from it. A man of his scholarship and his critical temperament must have very quickly perceived the extravagance, the one-sidedness, and the sciolism of not a few of those who took part in it. Yet it may still be questioned whether he was not to the day of his death a Romantic sheep (though a sheep as dangerous to meddle with as a Rocky Mountain ram) who chose to wear wolf's clothing and to howl with the wolves at times. His fondness for exotic, and what the mere French " Classic "

has always openly or privately held to be barbarian, subject, character, colour; the clear inclination to the supernatural which accompanies his would-be rationalism; the passion which underlies his impassive exterior, and the sentiment which is never far behind his apparent cynicism—nay the very forms and colours of that cynicism itself—are all Romantic. It is, however, really characteristic of him that he began with two books, in extreme Romantic style and admittedly of immense Romantic influence, which are among the most audacious and cold-blooded, if also among the most successful and finished, of hoaxes in literature. There never was any such person as "Clara Gazul," the pretended Spanish comic dramatist whose *Theatre* startled all Europe and delighted all lovers of Romance in the year 1825; there never was any such person as her spiritual kinsman, Hyacinthe Maglanovitch, the translation of whose Illyrian lyrics followed two years later as *La Guzla.* And the fact that the title of the latter book is ostentatiously anagrammatised from the author's name of the other (or *vice versa*) is a sufficient measure of the calm audacity of the author.

Still before 1830 and in complete outward accordance with the movement, he produced in 1828 the singular series of dialogue-sketches

called *La Jacquerie,* and in the next year—dropping the dialogue arrangement and adopting that of the regular historical novel which Scott had made popular—the *Chronique du Régne de Charles IX.* Of these, as of all or most of the works to be mentioned, we shall take proper notice hereafter, but for the present we must be mainly biographical. Whether by accident or not, Mérimée's appointment to his Inspectorship coincided with an apparent determination of his taste and enterprise away from works of any length and toward the short story. In this he achieved, during the next ten years, a reputation which for a full half century was never questioned. And though some changes of fashion have caused recent critics to attempt reservations as to this, there is very little doubt that his fame will be completely re-established by a later posterity. In 1844 he was elected to the Academy, in very suitable succession to Charles Nodier, who had practically shown him the way (though with far less art and style and especially with far less concentration and unity) to this very class of story.

The *coup d'etat,* and the Second Empire which followed, made a very great difference in Mérimée's fortunes. He was by no means a Bonapartist; indeed, though he had a strong dis-

like of democracy, it can not be said that he was attached to any French political party, either by intellectual or sentimental sympathies. He seems earlier to have had some positive dislike, if not even some positive contempt, of Louis Napoleon himself; and never, in what may be called their subsequent familiarity, got beyond a very lukewarm attitude toward him. But he had known from her early childhood, and was strongly attached to the beautiful and gracious Spanish-Scottish lady whom Napoleon soon made Empress; the Emperor himself, who had very few distinguished men of letters on his side, was only too glad to recruit one of the very greatest in France; and Mérimée, not by any means quite cheerfully, became, in 1853, a Senator. He astonished everybody by resigning his Inspectorship, which he might have kept, and which most men of the Imperial party, the distinguishing characteristic of which was certainly not disinterestedness or immaculate purity, as certainly *would* have kept.

For the seventeen years which elapsed between this time and the coincidence of his own death with the ruin of the Empire, Mérimée's life, which had already fallen into what may be called a variety of pretty identical grooves, changed these grooves a little but not much. His

headquarters in Paris remained the same; and so did what may be called his other headquarters at Cannes, where, in ever increasing ill health, he more and more established himself every winter. He still made regular journeys to England, where he had many friends and hosts, the chief of them being earlier Mr. Ellice of Glenquoich, and latterly Mr. (afterward Sir Antonio) Panizzi of the British Museum. And he still occasionally went elsewhere, especially to Spain, where Madame de Montijo, the Empress's mother, was his hostess at these times, as she was always his correspondent. Even his regular tours of inspection were in a manner replaced by visits almost as regular at the Imperial country residences of Fontainebleau, Compiegne, and Biarritz. It is difficult to be very certain whether he enjoyed these visits or not. He grumbles at them; but that is a common if not almost a universal piece of human hypocrisy in such cases. It is evident that the restraints of court dress, court hours, and court routine generally, were really and, in his later and more infirm days, seriously annoying to him, especially as he had a most un-French love of "home" and would certainly never have been prevented from marrying by the famous consideration "that he should have nowhere to

spend his evenings." And, as has been said, he had no warm affection for the Emperor, though they got on well enough when he was asked to assist in the *Vie de César;* he certainly was not more warmly disposed toward most of the members of the Imperial entourage; and while the growing " Papalino " tendency of Empire policy offended his prejudices, other points about it alarmed, with better reason, his patriotism, which was real, and his shrewdness, which was uncommon. Still his affection for the Empress, and hers for him, positively alleviated some of these things and served as a compensation for them all; and there is no doubt that Mérimée, who had in this or that way early made acquaintance with an unusual number of distinguished people in many European countries, was glad of the opportunity to maintain and extend it.

His changed life, moreover, was not entirely unfavourable to his literary production. He had always had a leaning toward historical study, and had produced his *History of Peter the Cruel* as early as 1843. He followed this up with a curious episode of Russian history, *Les Faux Demetrius,* just at the time of the change of government, and that, later still, with remarkable sketches of *Les Cosaques d'Autrefois.* He collected his *Miscellanies.* He began after a long

interval to write short stories again. But the most important production of his pen during this time, even as pure literature, and by far the most important as providing stuff for the reader and material for the student of humanity, is contained in his *Letters.*

It is necessary to read only two or three of these to see that Mérimée was a born letter-writer; and if, later in the century, it becomes possible for anyone to collect and edit them completely, the collection will probably equal that of Horace Walpole's in size, and yield to none in quality and variety of interest. As it is, though we have no very early ones and though what was apparently the longest and largest of all, the correspondence with Madame de Montijo, has never been published save in scraps and extracts, the known bulk is great. There is first and foremost the famous sequence (rather *in*-sequential, according to M. Filon) of the *Lettres à une Inconnue;* then those to Panizzi; then those *À une autre Inconnue,* which are the least interesting of all; then the extremely attractive and characteristic ones to Mrs. Senior which Count d'Haussonville published; then those which appeared a few years ago in the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* besides the abundant extracts in M. Filon's *Mérimée et ses Amis,* the collec-

tion to a Rabelaisian-antiquarian friend in the Avignon library, and others still.

So far as the life of the writer is concerned, the story told by Letters, unless very carefully garbled and economised by the editor, becomes necessarily a more and more sombre one as life draws more and more into "the browner shades"; and there was not likely to be an exception in the case of a pessimist like Mérimée. He had, however, the alleviations of tolerably ample means, of some warm friendships, to use no stronger word, and of a curious and rather unexampled domestic "guardianship," which he seems to have prized most unaffectedly, at the hands of two English ladies of mature age and friends of his mother, Miss Lagden and her sister Mrs. Ewers, who kept house for him at Cannes, and seem to have always been at hand in Paris, who watched by his deathbed in the chaos of the Année Terrible, and who saw to his interment.* His death on September 23, 1870, might, but for the infelicity of its circumstance, have been taken for a "happy release," inasmuch

* The surprised vexation of Mérimée's free-thinking, and the jealousy of his Roman Catholic friends, at first attributed to the meddling of these ladies, that he, a pronounced unbeliever, had been buried by a French Protestant minister. But it soon appeared that this was done by Mérimée's own direction, inserted in his will eighteen months before his death.

as it appears to have been painless and sudden, while he had for many months, and even many years, been suffering the most harassing inconvenience always, and sometimes the most intense pain, from a complication of lung, and other disorders.

It is usual, in studies of this kind, to subjoin immediately to the biographical part an estimate of the subject's character. But, as I have already observed, Mérimée's work and its purely literary qualities have to be taken in a rather uncommon conjunction with his life that each may interpret the other, and any characterisation had better be postponed. On one point, however, it may be as well to speak at once.

It has been usual, and for a long time I was myself not disinclined, to regard Mérimée's curious cynicism as to no small an extent a reflex if not an imitation, of the not entirely dissimilar attitude of Henri Beyle (De Stendhal) whom he knew when he was himself young, and as long as Beyle's life permitted. That there are resemblances nobody can deny, except in mere paradox; and Mérimée's own very remarkable article on Beyle is almost sufficient to show the sympathy between them. In the last twenty years or so, however, a great deal of new light has been shed, by fresh publication, on Beyle and

not a very little on Mérimée: and this has rather altered the complexion of the *rapport* between the two. Each has been shown to have been, in familiar phrase, a much better fellow than he pretended to be: while, on the other hand, the morbid and warped strains in each have been more clearly demonstrated and illustrated. But while the motto of both was no doubt that μέμνησο απιστεῖν* which Mérimée actually adopted, the complexion of their mistrust of themselves and of mankind was very different—even more different than their fortunes. Mérimée has been emphatically pronounced by more than one good judge "a gentleman," and it is exceedingly difficult to imagine any definition of that word that would take in Beyle. Beyle had been a really badly treated (though also a rather badly behaved) child, and he never forgot it; while his career was a string of failures. Mérimée was all his life rather "spoilt" by this or that person, and his career was in literature a brilliant and in other ways a considerable success.

Lastly, Mérimée, whether he did great things or small, did them with a leisurely and enjoying completeness, with an absolute knowledge of what he wanted to do and an absolute faculty of

*"Remember to distrust" inscribed in Greek by Mérimée on a ring.

doing it, which can hardly be paralleled; while Beyle's work is to a great extent mere sketch, if not mere fragment, and even in the more apparently finished pieces displays a want of accomplishment, an uneasy and almost fretful tentativeness, which is quite as much due to uncertainty of plan as to imperfect command of style. That these differences prevented Beyle from exercising any influence on Mérimée I should not dream of suggesting; but I think now that they limited that influence decidedly, and that Mérimée would have been very much what he was if he had never met, and even never read, Beyle at all.

Returning to the books, it will probably be well to observe a good old rule and despatch the least interesting and those which will not be included within the present collection, first. Mérimée's historical work occupies a peculiar—I should think almost a unique position. It is certainly not the most common of things to find a historian who possesses unlimited patience and devotion to the "document," possessing at the same time a signal command of purely literary power. It is still more uncommon to find these two faculties further combined with that not merely of writing, but of arranging what is written dramatically. Now Mérimée had all three—and all three to an extent very unusual,

while he also possessed a fourth and a fifth quality not less valuable than any of them, a piercing judgment and a robust common sense. No research was too troublesome for him; no man in Europe was his superior for pure style in his own language; and he was on the one hand the author of *Colomba,* on the other the author of the *Enlèvement de la Redoute.* One might have expected from him historical work as brilliant as Caryle's, but less volcanic, as masterly as Thucydides, but free from obscurity of phrase and awkwardness of arrangement. Yet, as a matter of fact, his writings of this class have never, I think, been much read even in France, while out of it they are hardly known, except to those who have special interest in their subjects. Not that these subjects are by any means devoid of interest in themselves, though some of them may be chargeable with a slightly parochial character, with handling what have been called in a famous phrase "battles of kites and crows." The two longer Roman studies * deal with hackneyed subjects, but the weariness of ancient history, which is felt or affected by some, is balanced by something quite different from weariness on the part of others.

The *History of Pedro the Cruel* is one of the

* *The Social War* and *The Conspiracy of Catiline.*

most typical historical romances of mediæval times: and if it is rendered awkward to deal with by the previous dealings of Froissart, the most delightful of all chroniclers, this does not apply everywhere, and Froissart himself can always be drawn upon for illustration and ornament. Indeed, as it is, Mérimée's Froissartesque versions of old Spanish chronicles are admirable sets-off to his story. That of the *False Demetrius* is again almost an ideal canvas for a historical novel: and the still obscurer fortunes and traditions as to Stenka Razine, if they suggest verse rather than prose, are perfectly Byronic. To me I confess the actual books * are not unattractive. The extraordinary limpidity of the style, which never drags, or ruffles itself, or degenerates, in all the obscure and complicated narrative; the critical judgment of character and probability, of fact and setting, more than save them. But I can quite understand their want of popularity. They are full of horrors; and though Mérimée does not in the least gloat over these, he recounts them a little too dispassionately. He may seem also a little too much to remember that he has been a romancer at other times, and to impress upon his readers that he is the soberest of historians here. He will never

* *Histoire de Don Pèdre* and *Les Cosaques d'Autrefois.*

"let himself go" in episode or peroration, in description or character. It would not have been difficult for a man of much less power, and it would have been perfectly easy for him, to make a most striking figure out of that Polish damsel of high degree, Marine Mniszek, who was by birth almost a princess, who was beautiful, who was for a few days Czarina of All the Russias; whose husband, "pretender" or not, was massacred almost before her eyes, while she herself narrowly escaped the same fate and worse; who then gave herself into the power of a coarser adventurer and for years was a sort of "Queen of the Leaguer" among wild Cossacks and outlaws; who was perhaps herself assassinated, and certainly died in a dungeon while still in the prime of her youth. Mérimée gives you all the facts, gives you them conscientiously, clearly, very far indeed from dully; but he refuses, with almost ostentatious abstinence, the few touches of art and nature which would have made her a heroine of romance, as well as a figure in history.

On the much more fully drawn figure of "Dampeter" (as Lord Berners calls Don Pedro) himself, Mérimée, though he is too critical to accept the whitewashing of certain Spanish historians, is by no means very un-

merciful. He sees perfectly well that on Peter, as on other kings elsewhere, was forced a war to the death with a turbulent, faithless, and by no means too patriotic nobility; that some of his most outrageous acts were justified by the common opinion of the time, and so forth. He tolerates the king's lawless amours; he even clears him of responsibility for some of the crimes brought against him. But once more he will hardly ever—in spite of himself he does now and then—breathe, as he so easily could, the little wind of the spirit that would clothe the dead tyrant's bones and endue his flesh with blood and life. *We* may do it if we like; we may—to change the metaphor—make the salad for ourselves. The green stuff is all beautifully washed and dished up; the bowl and spoons and forks are bright and clean; the cruets are full and at hand. But he will not exactly make it for us; at any rate he will not give it the last magical toss and whisk that completes the making.

Now readers (and they are not wholly to be blamed) usually resent this treatment, or at least decline to read the author who so treats them. It is beyond all doubt a noble ambition to " write true history," to assume that the reader is a serious student who desires nothing more

than to have the facts loyally discovered and intelligently ordered, the arguments judicially summarised and criticised. But whether it pays sufficient attention to that "human nature" which is after all the historian's main subject, may be questioned. And it is perhaps specially unwise (though it is specially natural) when the writer is "two" or more "gentlemen at once," when it is perfectly well known that he has all the necessary powers at command and merely declines to use them. Mérimée had, if he had chosen to attend to it, a good example set him by the greatest of his craftfellows in both crafts.

It is well known how fascinatingly Scott has told the history of Scotland, yet I have been assured by one of the soberest and most thoroughgoing students of that history from the purely historical side, that it would have been difficult in Scott's time to give a better account. Nor does Mérimée, any more than Scott himself, disdain reference to purely romantic or mythical "excursions and alarms." He does not omit the wild and ghastly legend of Stenka Razine, the Cossack pirate, flinging his Persian captive and mistress overboard in all her gorgeous array, not because he was tired of her, not because he had a quarrel with her, but as "a gift to the sea which had given him so much"; the almost

stranger justice—chivalrous justice for once—of Don Pedro on the felon defenders of the castle of Cabezon. But he will not give the vivifying touch to the whole, and so these wholes, as wholes, are neglected.

His Essays or Miscellanies * have an interest, if not intrinsically greater, yet for several reasons of wider appeal. Being all short, they make no severe demands on the attention of the reader, and they perhaps put the peculiar genius of the writer all the better. Moreover, in their wide diversity of subject there is something to suit almost everybody who has any literary tastes at all. They deal with art and archæology, with biography and literature, with history and bric-à-brac, with things ancient and things modern, with things French and things not French. The mere survey and casual selection of their contents—Cervantes, Nodier, Beyle, Froissart, Brantôme, Pushkin, Turgueineff, Gogol, The Mormons, A Tomb at Tarragona, The Hotel de Cluny, Spanish Literature, Military Architecture in the Middle Ages, Constantinople in 1403—supplies a sort of test of appetite; a person who can not find something appetising among these (and there are others)

* *Portraits Historiques et Littéraires; Mélanges Historiques et Littéraires; Etudes sur les Arts au Moyen Age.*

had better confine himself to his newspaper and the circulating library when he wants anything to read. They are as varied in length as they are in subject; there are pieces of half a dozen pages for the man who has a few minutes to fill up, and pieces of a hundred for him who can devote a more solid part of the day to them.

The literary prefaces are certainly not the least interesting, although Mérimée never cared to be as good a purely literary critic as he undoubtedly might have been. The best is almost beyond question the "Beyle," where his intense interest in the man and in life makes up, not merely for any deficiencies in pure literary handling on the part of the critic, but almost for any similiar deficiencies on the part of the subject himself. What with the presumed and what with the undoubted relations between the two men, their temperaments, and their productions, the peculiar appeal of the piece is such as it would be very difficult to find elsewhere; and the play of undercurrent feeling and thought, now ex- any similar deficiencies on the part of the subject, is extraordinarily attractive. The "Cervantes," the "Froissart" and the "Brantôme," especially the last, are written with that unfeigned *gusto* which counts for so much in literature. The "Pushkin," the "Tourgueineff" and

the " Gogol " will always hold rank as the " letters of introduction " (so to speak) of a new literature to Europe, by an introducer of exceptional competence and position. If there are two disappointing pieces here, they are the " Nodier " and the " Ampère." Yet the very disappointment is interesting because it is just (to use the hackneyed jest) what we always expected. Both were diploma-pieces, exercises set to the writer in his capacity as Academician. And these are the things that a man of Mérimée's temperament,—shy, proud, not used to taskwork, and decidedly recalcitrant to it, hating gush and gossip, rhetoric and rigmarole—always does worst.

I would fain dwell on his reviews of great histories, of politics and literature—Grote, Merivale, Ticknor—on the Mormon article, antiquated now, of course, as a mere piece of information and halting in the middle of the story even then, but a miracle of easy and orderly narration;—on the " Cossacks," which contains, with less elaboration and research, the gist of his later book on the subject. I should like to notice his extraordinarily sensible plan of reform for the French Schools of Art at Rome;—and still more the masterly articles, each longer than the other and each justifying its increased length by the combined art and matter of the

treatment, on *Mediæval Religious Architecture, Mediæval Military Architecture,* and *The Church of Saint Savin.* But if I did so, I should encroach too much on the space left me for his purely creative work—a space hardly, as it is, sufficient for "that which is here and that which is not"—for the fictions in semi-dramatic form which have had mostly to be excluded, as well as for those in direct narrative which are the main objects and subjects of the present undertaking. For, as I have said at the beginning, there is hardly any author who demands to be studied as a whole more than Mérimée; and while it is thus all the more necessary to notice the parts of his work which can not be reproduced here in full, it is at the same time desirable to distribute this notice with a view to the relative connection of these parts with his chief and principal function.

It is noteworthy enough that Mérimée's first exercises in this function, besides being hoaxes, were taken in paths which were not really his own. "Clara Gazul" writes things which at any rate look like plays; which at any rate are "Tig and Tirry" to use Dr. Johnson's quaint and agreeable figure.* Now, Mérimée cer-

*See Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes* (Johnsoniana, ed. Napier p. iii, or any ed.).

tainly had not the dramatic, at least the theatrical, genius proper. Unlike almost all other men of letters, he never made the least attempt upon the boards and the only thing of his that was ever brought there, the *Carrosse du Saint Sacrement,* was staged against his will, and justified his objections by failing as a play, though it is one of the most charming of stories *par personnages. La Guzla,* on the other hand, gives itself out as a translation of poetry; and affects the extremest poetic liberties of diction and of composition. And Mérimée, like Beyle, though perhaps not to the same extent, affected to care little, and did not probably care very much, for the form of verse. Yet both books have the most admirable literary quality—a quality so admirable as to make one heartily sorry that they are much more often spoken of as mere hoaxes than as anything else. To anyone who judges literature by what it is, and not by something else, the existence or non-existence of Hyacinthe Maglanovitch is a matter of absolute indifference. It is sufficient that the pieces which their creator chose to label with his name, whether they are Illyrian or not, whether they are Hyacinthian or not, are admirable folk-verse stuff, and much better than most originals. Some of them (for instance the opening one

The Hawthorn of Veliko) are indeed little more than clever imitations of Scott and Byron and Percy *plus* Illyrian "local colour." But the *Chant de Mort* and *Le Seigneur Mercure,* and the Vampyre poems, and *L'Amant en Bouteille* are not far short of masterpieces, and they supply an important "note" for the general appreciation of their author.

The "plays," under which head we may take not only *Clara Gazul* with the additions made to it later, but *La Famille Carvajal,* the *Jacquerie,* the more definitely dramatic volume entitled *Les Deux Héritages,* and the curious *Les Mécontents,* give us not merely a larger, but a more complicated and difficult subject. Authorities of the most diverse opinions have held that the connection between literature and drama is to a great extent fortuitous—that is to say, not, as it has been sometimes misunderstood, that a play may be thoroughly successful on the stage and have no literary qualities (which though true enough is immaterial), but that the qualities of literature as such, and the qualities of acted drama as such, are independent. Mérimée illustrates this remarkably from one side.

All the pieces referred to above are literature, generally of a high and sometimes of quite the highest class. Scarcely one gives, as we read

it, the idea of an actable drama, and not one that of a good actable drama; though there may be situations and scenes here and there which might make what is called a *saynète.* Except that he employs the dramatic method of presentation *par personnages* (to repeat that useful old French phrase) instead of that of narration—except that he has side-headings of speakers' names, and stage-directions, and divisions of scenes—the whole thing is pure romance or pure novel. If there were not a great deal of pedantry in human nature I do not know why we should object to this. Some of the pieces, *Les Espagnols en Danemark,* for instance; *Les Deux Héritages* and some others would perhaps be better in narrative prose. *Le Carrosse du Saint Sacrement* might be. But I do not seem to see *Une Femme est un Diable,* or *L'Occasion,* or *Le Ciel et L'Enfer,* nearly so well in the continuous form; and when I compare *La Jacquerie* with *Charles IX,* I am by no means sure that the former would gain by adapting the shape of the latter. Nay I am not certain that some of the objections which M. Filon (for instance) has taken to the latter might not lose their force if it had taken the shape of the former. On the other hand there is not one of the great short stories which would not lose hor-

ribly by being turned into the semi-dramatic form.

All this may be thought to show that Mérimée knew what he was about—a thing which perhaps happens more frequently than critics of great writers sometimes seem to perceive. His genius appears to have had what we may call its more concentrated and also its more desultory moments. In the former he wished to take a situation or set of situations, and put it, or them, with the utmost directness—" in column " as the military folk would say. Then he wrote in plain narrative prose. At other times he wished rather to skirmish, to stroll about his subject and sketch it from various points of view; then he took the form by personages. This latter has resulted in some wonderful work. For the *Famille Carvajal,* I have, I confess, no great affection or admiration. Here only, perhaps, has Mérimée fallen into the mistake which originated in Early Romantic times and which has survived all the changes to the present day, that the revolting is the striking in itself. The " horrors " of *La Jacquerie* have, with the greater length, helped to make it more unpopular, but I think unjustly. They are not ubiquitous; the constant panoramic change of scene and subject is, except for persons whose

power of attention is very feeble, rather fascinating; and the way in which the author manages not merely to paint manners but to insinuate character, is very masterly.

But the little group of short pieces in the form to which I have referred above—*Une Femme est un Diable, L'Occasion, Le Ciel et L'Enfer, Le Carrosse du Saint Sacrement,* supply the main justification of the arrangement; and they are so good in themselves that, with the one exception also hinted (as to which I am not quite sure) they could not possibly have been told as well narratively. Three of the four are tragical; only one comic; but the mastery in either direction is practically indifferent.

Une Femme est un Diable is perhaps the weakest; it probably owes something to Lewis's *Monk,* a very dangerous pattern, and the characters of the three inquisitors are somewhat conventional. But Mariquita, part victim, part almost unintentional temptress, is altogether admirable, and her various moods display a power of realisation and expression which the greatest masters of fiction have not surpassed. The pendant, for it is almost a pendant, *L'Occasion,* deserves at least the same praise and perhaps something higher still; for this is pure tragedy while the other is only subli-

mated melodrama. It is the most Browningesque of Mérimée's things; and it exhibits the quality, which Browning so curiously lacks, of being able to combine the dramatic, if not the theatrical, presentation of different characters in the same work, without making all but one merely foils to that one.

On the whole, however, *Le Ciel et L'Enfer,* which I think has not been a general favourite, seems to me the very best of the tragic pieces. The priest and the lover, though very good, are here purposely subordinated to Doña Urraca, the heroine; and once more her changes of mood, far deeper and more serious than Mariquita's, are a triumph. Coquetry, devotion, love, furious and almost murderous jealousy, love again and quite murderous repentance of the former act, all these drive over the soul of the heroine, and the scene of the story, like squalls and sunbursts on a stormy day—as suddenly, as irresistibly, as naturally. If Mérimée had written nothing else, he would have handed in his diploma-piece as a master with this.

He would have handed it as surely, though in another kind, if he had written nothing but *Le Carrosse du Saint Sacrement.* Here all is sunny enough; the spiteful tittle-tattle (whether it was quite false witness, one may be permitted

to entertain the shadow of a doubt) of the secretary Martinez only gives the slight touch of dark needed to set off the brightness. The Viceroy, who allows himself to be fooled without being, in more than the very least degree, a fool, and who is wise enough not to quarrel with his own happiness; the Bishop, as wise in his generation yet not other than a very respectable child of light for all that; all the minor characters are capital. But the heroine, La Périchole, is something better. She is not only Mérimée's most amiable heroine, but what I trust I may be permitted to call, in deliberate flouting of a pedant objection, his "nicest." From the point of view of strict morality, she may need a little absolution; but there is not a drop of bad blood in her, and she is as far from being silly as she is from being disagreeable. Her donation * is not only a stroke of genius as getting herself, the Viceroy, and others, out of a very awkward situation with flying colours, but it is also something better. His Excellency Don Andres de Ribera was most sincerely to be congratulated, even if he did share the subject of congratulation with a rather uncertain number of others. And this most fascinating

* The idea that this story is a piece of Mérimée's Voltairianism and intended to be offensive to orthodoxy, is quite gratuitous.

Camilla—light-footed as her Virgilian namesake, light-hearted as anyone, quite arguably not too light in other acceptations of the word—may introduce a slight protest in passing against the theory of Mérimée's "wicked heroine" which makes a great figure in some criticisms of him.

Of course the not-quite-good heroine has great accommodations and great temptations for the novelist and the poet. It is only a Shakespeare who can make Miranda and Imogen absolutely fascinating; and perhaps even in him there are some of us who prefer Cleopatra to either. Mérimée's pessimism, some unfortunate and not quite blameless experiences of his, his other experiences, blameless but still unfortunate, of a mother who though virtuous was "hard," added to the natural tendency of the artist to make use of the most effective materials, have all no doubt had some influence on his practice. But it is quite unfair to take Carmen, who is probably his best known heroine, as his typical one. Colomba's eccentric ideas on the subject of murder were in the circumstances no blight on her general character, which is both stainless and amiable; anybody who could be quite certain of the absence of awkward points in his genealogy would be a fool not to marry Colomba if she would have him. La Périchole, as we have seen, if not

quite stainless, has not one unamiable fault. Madame de Piennes, the agreeably mistaken heroine of *L'Abbé Aubain,* and others have nothing " fatal " or Lilith-like about them. Let us clear our minds of cant.

With minds so cleared we are in a fit state to approach the main body of Mérimée's greatest and least-questioned work, the prose tales in direct narrative form. In the usual French editions these are collected without much regard to date; but they fall chronologically into three broad divisions. The first, containing not merely *Charles IX* at the beginning and *Colomba* at the end, but most of the better-known short tales, was the product of the author's youth and tolerably early manhood, from 1829 to 1840. A smaller number, nearly all remarkable, including *Carmen, Arsène Guillot, L'Abbé Aubain* and the less generally popular but excellent *Il Viccolo di Madama Lucrezia,* are scattered over the forties; while two of the greatest, *Lokis* and *La Chambre Bleue,* date from quite the last years of Mérimée's life. But their characteristics are singularly equal; however much water may have passed the mill between 1829 and 1866, the interval saw little change and certainly no falling off in the artist's powers.

It is, however, generally agreed that those

powers were not displayed at their very happiest in the *Chronique de Charles IX,* though Mérimée never did better things than the book contains. The demand for "unity" is sometimes thought a pedantic one; and Apollo knows only too well how often it has been made in a pedantic spirit. But to say "The Devil take all Unity" is as dangerous in literature as to say "The Devil take all Order" has often proved to be in war, before and since Shakespeare formulated it in those words. The *Chronique,* with all its brilliant sliding scenes, all its panorama as of a vivid dream, is certainly deficient in unity of any kind, whether of action, of character, or even that uncovenanted mercy the "Unity of Interest." And it is unluckily sure to be confronted with other work of the same time, or nearly so, in which, whether unity of action and character is present or not, unity of interest certainly is—the work of Dumas. I am myself extremely fond of the *Chronique,*—neither because nor in spite of the fact that I once translated it. But I can quite understand others failing to like it, and I can see that it has some positive defects.

I should be much less accommodating in the case of the shorter tales, from *L'Enlèvement de la Redoute* to *Colomba.* The last quarter of the

nineteenth century prided itself particularly on its short stories, and I understand that the pride has been taken on by the twentieth. Indeed I have seen it said *totidem verbis*, that, good as they may be, Mérimée's examples can not pretend to the subtlety, the poignancy, the true philosophico-mythical character of ours. Well, " a gude conceit of ourselves " is no doubt a good gift of Providence in a way. But I fear I am not able to share it in this particular instance, and to this particular extent. To speak of living persons is invidious, but there are, I suppose, few living persons who would rank themselves or any of their contemporaries as superior to the late M. Guy de Maupassant in the short story. And much as I admire Maupassant, glad as I am to think I was among the very first English critics to hail him, I certainly do *not* think that he has beaten Mérimée. Even in what *les jeunes* seem to consider the last secret of their art, the secret of not finishing, of leaving a problem and a suggestion, Mérimée knew all about it, though, like a great artist, he did not too often indulge in what is at its best something of a trick, while it may be something worse —a mere subterfuge to hide an inability to finish —a sort of literary parallel to the proceedings of that gifted painter who put forth as his mas-

terpiece a picture of "Strasburg Cathedral in the Dark."

For myself, I have never known which to admire most—the variety of effect which Mérimée produces; the economy of means by which he produces it; or the absolute perfection of the effect produced. Except by mere paradoxers of the school just glanced at, who find it too definite and clear, *L'Enlèvement de la Redoute* has always been confessed to be a *ne plus ultra*. It is in race-horse condition; not an ounce of flesh on it that can hamper or drag its progress, not a muscle wanting in development to carry it at swiftest and surest toward the goal. The same is the case with what is perhaps its companion in general esteem, *Mateo Falcone*. But Mérimée, though never luxuriant, is not always thus ascetic. There is nothing of his that I myself prefer to the *Venus d'Ille* which has the accidental but not unimportant charm of having the same subject as another masterpiece by another master as different as possible, Mr. William Morris's *Ring Given to Venus*. Indeed, Mérimée's management of the supernatural is one of the most interesting points about him, and supplies another "note" to be carefully heeded in estimating his general character, literary and other. The blending here of

comedy with tragedy, of incident and suggestion, is unrivalled, or rivalled only by the other mixture of the voluptuous and the terrible. To call it, as it has been called, " a materialistic myth " is at least to suggest a gross misunderstanding. It is a resurrection of the flesh and blood from which all true myths have been originated.

For two great favourites with some good judges, *Tamango* and *La Partie de Tric-Trac,* I care less, though they would certainly make the fortune of any other tale-teller. But who shall overpraise *Les Ames du Purgatoire?* I know no story of any writer to the style of which one of the hack words of criticism " limpid " applies so absolutely; and once more it has one of those extraordinary blends, antithesis, antinomies, which give such a savour to those who can savour them in literature. Mérimée is given out—perhaps gave himself out—as a professed unbeliever to an extent rather endangering his general reputation for restraint and " good form." Yet the religious tone which this story requires is infused neither in the least insufficiently nor with that ostentatious excess which is often visible in similar cases. And what is even more wonderful, it is kept in harmony with plenty of satiric touches; while the crisis-

scene, where Don Juan is present at the last possible mass for his own soul, is almost unbelievably good. Again, I know nothing like it anywhere.

The two, tragi-comic stories of society, *La Double Méprise* and *Le Vase Etrusque* may be very slightly injured now (as all stories of society are) by the fact that their atmosphere is of the day before yesterday; but that will come right as in other cases, and their merits will remain.

Colomba and *Carmen*—the latter perhaps by the more adventitious and rather treacherous aid of music and acting than in itself, but still also in itself—are so much the best known things of their author that it is rather difficult to write of them; but they are also so much the most "considerable," in plenary combination of most of the senses of that word, that they can not be shirked. There can be no reasonable doubt that their author intended them as pendant studies of the South, and of the women of the South. As such, they could not—no such work from a man of Mérimée's age could—escape a slightly Byronic touch; but Mérimée's intense feeling for the absurd, the purity of his taste, and the detachment which it would be too complimentary to modernity to call modern in him, have completely kept off the rancid and the grotesque

flavour and colour which usually mar Byronism. I have said that I think Colomba was meant to be, and that I think she is, quite a good girl, and quite a "nice" though rather a formidable one. It is less a point of faith whether Mérimée has entirely freed her brother from the touch of comparative unmanliness which is almost inevitably suggested by such a Pallas-Diana of a sister. But the fact I think, is that Orso, Lydia, her father, the Prefect, the bandits, and all the rest are designedly, and in the case allowably, intended to be foils and sets-off to this Pallas-Diana herself. The pains which Mérimée has taken with her are extraordinary, and some of their results—the touch of literary interest in Dante, the *camaraderie* with the colonel and other things—may escape the careless; but they should not. Although knowing it to be wrong, one desiderates a sequel; and I should like to ask Mr. "Anthony Hope" whether Phroso owes anything consciously to Colomba.

In *Carmen,* on the other hand, the interest is very much less centred in the heroine; indeed I am heretically inclined to think that the wicked gitana is much less really the heroine than José Navarro is the hero. She has a little too much of what I have just called her "the wicked gitana" in other words, of the type—that

bane of French literature, which Mérimée, as a rule, has so successfully eluded or vanquished. Her hapless lover is much more of an individual, and it is more her office, baneful or not, to bring out his individuality than to display her own. It may even seem to some that the great chagrin of Mérimée's life—his jilting by an unlawful love of many years' standing—has reflected itself too closely for art in his delineation of Carmen's character. It is quite naturally possible that Carmen, after years of faithful infidelity and false truth to José, should suddenly lose all fancy for him; but it is not so possible artistically or rather (for perhaps everything is possible artistically) it is not quite made probable in the story. Yet even here the slip (if slip it be) is redeemed by the girl's blend of fatalism and recklessness, her refusal even to deprecate the punishment which she has provoked.

If, however, the character-painting on one side be a little "out," it is flawless on the other; and the action, the description, and the rest throughout are incomparable. For a good deal of the "local colour" which he laughed at, loved and used so victoriously, Mérimée is no doubt indebted to Borrow, but he knew Spain intimately enough to make the borrowing (this pun is entirely unintentional) his own, and the

matchless method of narration is his without a suspicion of a doubt. Never was there a story which held the reader from beginning to end in so relentless and yet so delightful a grasp; and seeing that it is not so very short this grip is even more remarkable than in mere "moments" of tale-telling like *Mateo Falcone* and the *Redoute*. Nor should we omit to notice the peculiar mastery of Mérimée's management of his rôle as narrator with a slight touch of actor as well. The conveniences of this have constantly recommended it to tale-tellers both on the small scale and the great; its inconveniences have perhaps only dawned on them when it was too late. Mérimée is rather fond of it, as here, in the *Venus d'Ille,* in *Lokis* and elsewhere. I can not think of a single instance in which he falls or even makes a false step; and it is only necessary to set against this the absolute and in fact confessed failure of Dickens in the first version of *The Old Curiosity Shop* and the by no means complete success of Mr. Stevenson in *The Master of Ballantrae.*

French critics, and perhaps some later English critics who have followed them have been specially interested in *Arsène Guillot.* The reasons, more and less convincing, of this interest are obvious enough. The piece is Mérimée's—

that is almost as much as to say it has the easy mastery, the almost bewildering completeness and satisfaction of this master. But it displays these traits with an admixture of condescension to the weaker vessels and brethren,—to those who want something of impropriety in subject, something of conventional satire in treatment. Mérimée did sometimes condescend; and he has so condescended here. But he has not condescended very far and therefore, naturally, some say that he has not condescended far enough,—that Arsène is but a bread-and-butter Magdalen; Madame de Piennes a weakling "beautiful-soul-with-temptations"; Max a wishy-washy Don Juan. I do not agree with them, but I venture to take their grumbles as evidence that Mérimée has not gained very much by his condescension. I doubt whether anybody ever does. *Tu contra audentior ito* is the motto in art almost more than anywhere else. Not that I want him to be Zolaesque, which indeed he could never have been, being an artist first and last of all. But his business was not with the peculiar mixture of satire and sentiment which constitutes the appeal here.

L'Abbé Aubain, on the other hand, is a thoroughly delightful thing, and as masterly in reality as it is slight in appearance. Its interest

is that of pure irony, though irony of the lightest and most delicate nature; and as all the great masters of irony know how to do, it is left by its author to make or miss its own way. If they duly receive new writings in Elysium and converse about them, I know what Lucian and Rabelais and Swift and Fielding (Thackeray was alive) said when they had read this little sketch of the romance conjured up by the lady, and the sober and solid benefit received by the unsuspecting and prosaic priest.

In *Il Viccolo di Madama Lucrezia* (written in 1846, but not published till posthumously), the appeals are more complex, and perhaps for that reason, I do not know that it has ever become a great favourite. The suggested supernatural, neither frankly "occultist," nor explained away fully in the Mrs. Radcliffe manner, appears in it, and this is an element which always commends itself very differently to different persons.* I think very highly of it myself, and in connection with it, I may mention the remarkable *Djoûmane* which also appeared with the *Dernières Nouvelles,* after being published in the *Moniteur,* and the exact date of which is unknown. It is one of the best dream

* Some might say that it *is* fully explained here, but I do not think that Mérimée meant it so.

stories that I know, and in particular I hardly know one that effects so complete a triumph in disguising the point of the story where actuality passes into dream. I am myself, not merely a reader of stories of some fifty years' standing, but a reviewer of them through more than twenty; and I do not think I am very easy to deceive on such a point as this. Yet the first time that I read *Djoûmane,* I confess that I was taken in, not quite to the end, but nearly so.

As for the last fruits of this wonderful tree, *La Chambre Bleue* and *Lokis,* the former has been carped at for its arrangement and the latter because we happen to know that Mérimée had at one time thought of making it more eccentric and more " scabrous " than it is now, at least on the surface. But this latter point of view is accidental and illegitimate; and we have nothing to do, as critics, with anything but the tales as they are actually submitted to us. And they are all but impeccable. The desideration of a different ending or a different beginning or a different middle for *La Chambre Bleue* is one of these critical ineptitudes for which there are two admirable proverbial phrases,—" Seeking noon at fourteen o'clock " and " Asking for better bread than is made of wheat." Mérimée, whose knowledge of life, if not coexten-

sive with life itself (whose is?) was infallible where it extended, has taken two noted facts of life, the petty disappointment of great expectations, and the curious "terrors of the night" (for which in French there is an untranslatable word, *affres*) and has based his story on them. Those who know the facts will prize the story; of those who do not know them, one does not really know whether to say "Lucky fellows!" or "Poor creatures!"

Lokis aims higher. I should call it in all but the highest degree imaginative: few can refuse it the epithet of fanciful in all but the highest. In these highly pitched stories, the great difficulty is in the setting of the key at first, no doubt, but still more in the observation of it afterward. To my thinking, Mérimée has here "kept the keeping," restrained his foot from ever stepping out of the enchanted circle, in a way that has never been surpassed. You could not have a better teller of such a story than the matter-of-fact but by no means milksop or merely pedantic hunter of Lithuanian irregular verbs; you could not put the setting better; you could not arrange a heroine more tempting and more provoking, or sketch an impossible-probable hero more convincingly. Every page of the history is a miracle; but the greatest miracles

of all, I think, are the Count's acknowledgment of his (or Lokis') escapade in the tree, and the episode of the sorceress and the "land of the beasts beyond the marsh." The Count, we are told, was never seen after the tragedy in the bridal chamber; but we know where he went. I am not sure, however, that they crowned him successor to King Noble.

Finally, we have to turn on the results thus obtained the searchlight of the *Letters*. Those to the *Inconnue* will sufficiently illustrate what is going to be said, for the average reader; the student really interested in Mérimée should not miss anything yet published, although the *Lettres à une Autre Inconnue* have the least really intimate note and add least of any kind to the others. Those to Panizzi, perhaps, give most idea of the capacity for solid friendship, quite apart from sentiment or passion, which is so remarkable a feature in Mérimée; which seemed during his lifetime most incredible to shallow and superficial observers; and which supplies a most valuable corrective, even for those who do not deserve such an appellation, of the slightly paraded cynicism of some of his creative work. Those to Mrs. Senior give the most poetical touches—it is here that we find that exquisite piece of pathetic humour, the story of the mad-

man who kept the Princess of China in a bottle, till the bottle broke (compare *La Guzla* as cited above). Nor is there anything in the *Inconnue* letters themselves (which are too sincere) quite approaching the delicate and fantastic *flirtation* of these same letters to the English woman who had golden hair, and whose *papier rose d'outremer gentiment orné des mouches* was warranted by the faculty to cure the most obstinate neuralgia.

I think myself that there is *quant. suff.* of seriousness even here. There can be no reasonable doubt of it as to the *Inconnue*. The mystery about the individual has been pretty well cleared up, though perhaps future generations will know more details about the personality of Mlle. Jenny Dacquin than we do. Such knowledge, intensely interesting it would seem to some people, is less so to others. What the whole course of the affair was and meant, why they did not marry (a thing which has puzzled even Frenchmen, less apt than ourselves to see in marriage the natural goal of love), and other questions I leave to those who like them. But I certainly must protest against the opinion of (I think) a recent *Edinburgh Reviewer* that the lady must have been rather a nuisance. Nobody perfect in love-lore, or even (for who is that?)

nobody who has passed the lower degrees in it, could be of that mind. On the other hand, that Mérimée himself was, as the phrase goes, " head over ears " is pretty clear. Some at least of the letters are among the most perfect love letters with which, in a pretty considerable acquaintance with the class of literature designated and so often misdesignated by that name, I have ever been able to acquaint myself. They are not, of course, extravagant, or lackadaisical; they have nothing of the stale *pot-pourri* odour about them, which seems to be so successful in sham collections of the kind, and which is perhaps not unknown in real ones. The spirit of them is passion, not sentiment, and long afterward, when (one does not quite know how) the passion has apparently subsided, the vestiges of the old flame flash and glow through the chit-chat and the commonplaces of age, nay, under the very shadow and chill of the wings of the Angel of Death. There is not the slightest reason to suppose or to suspect what is so often more than suspected in epistolary literature, that the writer, if not exactly writing for publication, is, let us say, taking care that his or her letters shall not be absolutely unprepared for that experience, if it should come. On the contrary, it is probable, or rather certain, that the bare idea

of such publication in this case would have been horrible to Mérimée. Yet we can hardly blame Mlle. Dacquin, even if we were not bribed by the gift she has bestowed upon us. The " petty treason " of revealing this thirty years' love, has a manifold atonement—of humour in the spectacle of this sceptic's enthusiasm and this cynic's inamoration; of justice in its reversal of a false public opinion; of coals-of-fire even—for there can be no doubt that Mérimée made the *Inconnue* even more unhappy than she made him and with far less excuse, yet, humanity being humanity, with so much excuse after all!

At any rate, here is the man " in his habit as he lived " in the one sense, as opposed to the writer in his habit as he seemed to so many, in the other. A man assuredly not perfect; nor a proper moral man by any means; not a religious one; not other things which the good man of the modern Stoics ought to be. A man with a fancy for some things which are not convenient; somewhat (though not when his friends were concerned) self-indulgent; by no means over-inclined to swim against the stream, though he could do this too; something of an epicurean, though not so much as he seemed to be; even less of a cynic, but a little somewhat of that too. Yet a man, who to very rare gifts of in-

tellect added gifts not exactly common of heart and (I must ask indulgence for a minute) even of *soul;* a man who *could* (in the old Carlyle-Emerson sense) divine very much; who *knew* even more; and lastly, who *loved* more than all.

From mere gusto in the true art sense, from mere enjoyment and interest in the things of what some have been pleased to call the Coarse Arts, to actual passion, this peculiarity is noticeable by those we can see just as it is not noticeable in some great poets and prose-writers who have entirely escaped the reputation of cynicism and gained that of being very good men. Indeed, Mérimée's surface may sometimes show like ice, but there is almost always fire beneath, and it is this which gives him his peculiar quality—a quality not more noteworthy in his choice and handling of subjects than in his style itself.

This style of his has been the object of almost universal admiration among the competent, the only reservations having been made by those who, like Mr. Pater, had a somewhat excessive fancy for the "precious," or those who, like Mr. Henley, were affected in the same way toward the "strenuous." For both of these classes it may be a little too quiet and plain, too cold, and (as statues used to be though they are not al-

ways now) "statuesque." But with all the respect due to the representative persons just named, both as critics and friends, I venture to think both mistaken. Mérimée's style is as nearly as possible faultless, and it is also, in appearance, severely restrained. But its faultlessness is never of the kind which is itself faulty by nullity—of the kind that almost all great critics and creators, from Longinus to Tennyson, have scouted and eschewed. Nor do its restraint and its polish ever imply or reach impotence or insignificance. The old simile of the ice-covered volcano, which has been applied elsewhere to its author, is almost more applicable to him as a pure writer than in any other function, and the white light of his style is made up of easily analysable and distinguishable spectra of the most vivid and iridescent colour. It is in this heat and this colour—kept below and behind, but only a little behind and below the surface of the foreground—that his great idiosyncrasy consists. I can hardly think of any other writer who quite comes up to him in this respect, though there are points of resemblance in Cardinal Newman. The very polished styles are, as a rule, wanting in life and warmth, the very clear styles, in colour and energy. But Mérimée's lacks none of these good things, while

for clearness and polish themselves, it is almost without a rival.

Perhaps it would have been impossible to better the selection of such a style (even if most people had not now come around to the inevitable identification of style with idiosyncrasy), for Mérimée's subjects, taking these, in their quintessential and truly literary forms, to be prose fiction on the smaller scale, and the composition of passionate or familiar letters. For everywhere in both of these departments, there is the opportunity for the blend or rather the contrast of surface and subsoil or undercurrent, which even M. d'Haussonville—by no means a very favourable, and I think sometimes a distinctly mistaken critic of Mérimée—admits. All satirists live upon the perception and the expression of contrasts; but the greater and more passionate of them heighten and widen the contrasts most while at the same time managing to present them in the least crude or staring fashion. How you take Mérimée's antinomies, will of course depend upon taste and method. M. d'Haussonville thought that Mérimée was perpetually "out of sympathy with his readers," was at least perpetually warning them not to take him too seriously. For myself, I can see in this only the same hopeless blunder as that

of those who think "Only a woman's hair" an expression of callousness, and "She should have died hereafter" a sign that Macbeth had lost all affection for his wife. Swift and Shakespeare do not think or write in that fashion; neither does Mérimée. There are two ends and two sides to most things, and if you will take the wrong one, it is not the fault of the things themselves, nor of their creators, but yours. So it is possible for anyone, even after the warning of the *Letters,* to see in *Colomba* only the old Hume-and-Voltaire ridicule of the uncertainty of human conception of virtue and crime; in *Carmen,* mere lampooning of the wickedness of women and the weakness of men; in *Arsène Guillot,* mere Mephistophelanism, everywhere the cloven foot or the mere detection of the cloven foot.

So be it. But those who are of another house, while perfectly admitting, perfectly perceiving, the "colour" of all this and for all this which exists, will take it to be in the other sense merely "colourable"—at most mainly intended to bring out and set off and express things very different. They will use the implorer of those interviews with the *Inconnue* which quite evidently gave Mephistopheles no occasion for sniggering, to throw light on the methods of

the supposed satirist of love and materialist in it. They will not mistake the constant and apparently irresistible attraction of this *esprit fort* to the supernatural, and the fact that in no single instance where the supernatural is introduced is it introduced to be ridiculed, or degraded, or rationalised, or even smiled at. Perhaps they will go even farther and maintain that Mérimée, for all his open breach with the *personnel* of the Romantic movement, for all his jokes at local colour, and the rest, all his expressed distaste for poetry, all the fanfaronnade in which these dreaders of dupery so often indulge, remained to the very last a Romantic, pure, hardened, immutable in every quality except that mere outward extravagance which is at best and worst but a very separable accident of Romanticism. Gautier, though much more of a poet and therefore more of an idealist than Mérimée, is less really a Romantic; Hugo, himself, putting extravagances aside and once more allowing for poetry, is not more so. The extreme outward precision of Mérimée's style, its horror of the bombastic and the dishevelled, has no doubt deceived some as to the presence in him of the Romantic passion, the Romantic colour, the Romantic vogue. But they are all there; to be seen by whoso chooses, or at any

rate (for perhaps this power is necessary) by whoso chooses *and can.*

Therefore, unless I myself mistake grossly, it is a mistake and a grave one to speak of Mérimée as having no "soul," a mistake almost as great as to take him for an exponent of cynical disbelief in life and of arid and limited correctness in literature. His work at its best always glows with "earth-born and absolute fire"; his life often palpitates with what is nothing less than tragedy. This word is often used of authors, but for the most part improperly. Dante's life and career are serious, they are unprosperous in the ordinary sense, but they are not tragical because he is absolutely victorious in literature. He has given us the utmost that it was in him, that it could have been in any man, to give. Burns' life (to take an example as different as possible) is unprosperous too, is in some points almost sordid, and his work is unequal. But he, too, has undoubtedly given us of the best which he had to give, and as for his life, it is very doubtful whether had he been consulted, he would have ordered it very differently. And the same may be said of others. But perhaps two only of the Upper House of Letters in modern times leave us with the impression of pure tragedy, of the state and situa-

tion where greatness of soul and of position, greatness of accomplishment and deed, does not yet prevent the true tragic ἁμαρτία, the human frailty and failure, the "rift within the lute," from marring their total achievement almost, altogether. The faults in the two cases, though not distantly related to each other, are different; but the result upon the spectator is, as at least it seems to me, very much the same—a result of immense admiration, of general (not always detailed) comprehension, of infinite sympathy. And the names of the heroes, anticipated of course in one case, should be in both: they are Jonathan Swift and Prosper Mérimée.

George Saintsbury

2 Eton Terrace, Edinburgh,
January, 1905.

CARMEN

CARMEN

Πᾶσα γυνὴ χόλος ἐστίν, ἔχει δ' ἀγαθάς δύο ὥρας·
Τήν μίαν ἐν θαλάμῳ, τήν μίαν ἐν θανάτῳ.*

PALLADAS.

I

I HAVE always suspected the geographical authorities did not know what they were talking about when they located the battlefield of Munda in the county of the Bastuli-Poeni, close to the modern Monda, some two leagues north of Marbella.

According to my own surmise, founded on the text of the anonymous author of the *Bellum Hispaniense*, and on certain information culled from the excellent library owned by the Duke of Ossuna, I believed the site of the memorable struggle in which Cæsar played double or quits, once and for all, with the champions of the Republic, should be sought in the neighbourhood of Montilla.

Happening to be in Andalusia during the

* Every woman is mere bitterness, but she has two good moments: one is when on her couch, the other when in her grave.—*Palladas.*

autumn of 1830, I made a somewhat lengthy excursion, with the object of clearing up certain doubts which still oppressed me. A paper which I shall shortly publish will, I trust, remove any hesitation that may still exist in the minds of all honest archæologists. But before that dissertation of mine finally settles the geographical problem on the solution of which the whole of learned Europe hangs, I desire to relate a little tale. It will do no prejudice to the interesting question of the correct locality of Monda.

I had hired a guide and a couple of horses at Cordova, and had started on my way with no luggage save a few shirts, and Cæsar's *Commentaries*. As I wandered, one day, across the higher lands of the Cachena plain, worn with fatigue, parched with thirst, scorched by a burning sun, cursing Cæsar and Pompey's sons alike, most heartily, my eye lighted, at some distance from the path I was following, on a little stretch of green sward dotted with reeds and rushes. That betokened the neighbourhood of some spring, and, indeed, as I drew nearer I perceived that what had looked like sward was a marsh, into which a stream, which seemed to issue from a narrow gorge between two high spurs of the Sierra di Cabra, ran and disappeared.

If I rode up that stream, I argued, I was likely to find cooler water, fewer leeches and frogs, and mayhap a little shade among the rocks.

At the mouth of the gorge, my horse neighed, and another horse, invisible to me, neighed back. Before I had advanced a hundred paces, the gorge suddenly widened, and I beheld a sort of natural amphitheatre, thoroughly shaded by the steep cliffs that lay all around it. It was impossible to imagine any more delightful halting place for a traveller. At the foot of the precipitous rocks, the stream bubbled upward and fell into a little basin, lined with sand that was as white as snow. Five or six splendid evergreen oaks, sheltered from the wind, and cooled by the spring, grew beside the pool, and shaded it with their thick foliage. And round about it a close and glossy turf offered the wanderer a better bed than he could have found in any hostelry for ten leagues round.

The honour of discovering this fair spot did not belong to me. A man was resting there already—sleeping, no doubt—before I reached it. Roused by the neighing of the horses, he had risen to his feet and had moved over to his mount, which had been taking advantage of its master's slumbers to make a hearty feed on the

grass that grew around. He was an active young fellow, of middle height, but powerful in build, and proud and sullen-looking in expression. His complexion, which may once have been fine, had been tanned by the sun till it was darker than his hair. One of his hands grasped his horse's halter. In the other he held a brass blunderbuss.

At the first blush, I confess, the blunderbuss, and the savage looks of the man who bore it, somewhat took me aback. But I had heard so much about robbers, that, never seeing any, I had ceased to believe in their existence. And further, I had seen so many honest farmers arm themselves to the teeth before they went out to market, that the sight of firearms gave me no warrant for doubting the character of any stranger. "And then," quoth I to myself, "what could he do with my shirts and my Elzevir edition of Cæsar's *Commentaries?*" So I bestowed a friendly nod on the man with the blunderbuss, and inquired, with a smile, whether I had disturbed his nap. Without any answer, he looked me over from head to foot. Then, as if the scrutiny had satisfied him, he looked as closely at my guide, who was just coming up. I saw the guide turn pale, and pull up with an air of evident alarm. "An unlucky meeting!"

thought I to myself. But prudence instantly counselled me not to let any symptom of anxiety escape me. So I dismounted. I told the guide to take off the horses' bridles, and kneeling down beside the spring, I laved my head and hands and then drank a long draught, lying flat on my belly, like Gideon's soldiers.

Meanwhile, I watched the stranger, and my own guide. This last seemed to come forward unwillingly. But the other did not appear to have any evil designs upon us. For he had turned his horse loose, and the blunderbuss, which he had been holding horizontally, was now dropped earthward.

Not thinking it necessary to take offence at the scant attention paid me, I stretched myself full length upon the grass, and calmly asked the owner of the blunderbuss whether he had a light about him. At the same time I pulled out my cigar-case. The stranger, still without opening his lips, took out his flint, and lost no time in getting me a light. He was evidently growing tamer, for he sat down opposite to me, though he still grasped his weapon. When I had lighted my cigar, I chose out the best I had left, and asked him whether he smoked.

"Yes, señor," he replied. These were the first words I had heard him speak, and I noticed

that he did not pronounce the letter *s* * in the Andalusian fashion, whence I concluded he was a traveller, like myself, though, maybe, somewhat less of an archæologist.

"You'll find this a fairly good one," said I, holding out a real Havana regalia.

He bowed his head slightly, lighted his cigar at mine, thanked me with another nod, and began to smoke with a most lively appearance of enjoyment.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, as he blew his first puff of smoke slowly out of his ears and nostrils. "What a time it is since I've had a smoke!"

In Spain the giving and accepting of a cigar establishes bonds of hospitality similar to those founded in Eastern countries on the partaking of bread and salt. My friend turned out more talkative than I had hoped. However, though he claimed to belong to the *partido* of Montilla, he seemed very ill-informed about the country. He did not know the name of the delightful valley in which we were sitting, he could not tell me the names of any of the neighbouring villages, and when I inquired whether he had not

* The Andalusians aspirate the *s*, and pronounce it like the soft *c* and the *z*, which Spaniards pronounce like the English *th*. An Andalusian may always be recognised by the way in which he says *señor*.

noticed any broken-down walls, broad-rimmed tiles, or carved stones in the vicinity, he confessed he had never paid any heed to such matters. On the other hand, he showed himself an expert in horseflesh, found fault with my mount—not a difficult affair—and gave me the pedigree of his own, which had come from the famous stud at Cordova. It was a splendid creature, indeed, so tough, according to its owner's claim, that it had once covered thirty leagues in one day, either at a gallop or at full trot the whole time. In the midst of his story the stranger pulled up short, as if startled and sorry he had said so much. "The fact is I was in a great hurry to get to Cordova," he went on, somewhat embarrassed. "I had to petition the judges about a lawsuit." As he spoke, he looked at my guide, Antonio, who had dropped his eyes.

The spring and the cool shade were so delightful that I bethought me of certain slices of an excellent ham, which my friends at Montilla had packed into my guide's wallet. I bade him produce them, and invited the stranger to share our impromptu lunch. If he had not smoked for a long time, he certainly struck me as having fasted for eight-and-forty hours at the very least. He ate like a starving wolf, and I thought to myself that my appearance must really have

been quite providential for the poor fellow. Meanwhile my guide ate but little, drank still less, and spoke never a word, although in the earlier part of our journey he had proved himself a most unrivalled chatterer. He seemed ill at ease in the presence of our guest, and a sort of mutual distrust, the cause of which I could not exactly fathom, seemed to lie between them.

The last crumbs of bread and scraps of ham had disappeared. We had each smoked our second cigar; I told the guide to bridle the horses, and was just about to take leave of my new friend, when he inquired where I was going to spend the night.

Before I had time to notice a sign my guide was making to me I had replied that I was going to the Venta del Cuervo.

"That's a bad lodging for a gentleman like you, sir! I'm bound there myself, and if you'll allow me to ride with you, we'll go together."

"With pleasure!" I replied, mounting my horse. The guide, who was holding my stirrup, looked at me meaningly again. I answered by shrugging my shoulders, as though to assure him I was perfectly easy in my mind, and we started on our way.

Antonio's mysterious signals, his evident anxiety, a few words dropped by the stranger, above all, his ride of thirty leagues, and the far from plausible explanation he had given us of it, had already enabled me to form an opinion as to the identity of my fellow-traveller. I had no doubt at all I was in the company of a smuggler, and possibly of a brigand. What cared I? I knew enough of the Spanish character to be very certain I had nothing to fear from a man who had eaten and smoked with me. His very presence would protect me in case of any undesirable meeting. And besides, I was very glad to know what a brigand was really like. One doesn't come across such gentry every day. And there is a certain charm about finding one's self in close proximity to a dangerous being, especially when one feels the being in question to be gentle and tame.

I was hoping the stranger might gradually fall into a confidential mood, and in spite of my guide's winks, I turned the conversation to the subject of highwaymen. I need scarcely say that I spoke of them with great respect. At that time there was a famous brigand in Andalusia, of the name of José-María, whose exploits were on every lip. "Supposing I should be riding along with José-María!" said I to myself.

I told all the stories I knew about the hero—they were all to his credit, indeed, and loudly expressed my admiration of his generosity and his valour.

"José-María is nothing but a blackguard," said the stranger gravely.

"Is he just to himself, or is this an excess of modesty?" I queried, mentally, for by dint of scrutinising my companion, I had ended by reconciling his appearance with the description of José-María which I read posted up on the gates of various Andalusian towns. "Yes, this must be he—fair hair, blue eyes, large mouth, good teeth, small hands, fine shirt, a velvet jacket with silver buttons on it, white leather gaiters, and a bay horse. Not a doubt about it. But his *incognito* shall be respected!" We reached the *venta*. It was just what he had described to me. In other words, the most wretched hole of its kind I had as yet beheld. One large apartment served as kitchen, dining-room, and sleeping chamber. A fire was burning on a flat stone in the middle of the room, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof, or rather hung in a cloud some feet above the soil. Along the walls five or six old mule rugs were spread on the floor. These were the travellers' beds. Twenty paces from the house,

or rather from the solitary apartment which I have just described, stood a sort of shed, that served for a stable.

The only inhabitants of this delightful dwelling visible at the moment, at all events, were an old woman, and a little girl ten or twelve years old, both of them as black as soot, and dressed in loathsome rags. "Here's the sole remnant of the ancient populations of Munda Bœtica," said I to myself. "O Cæsar! O Sextus Pompeius, if you were to revisit this earth how astounded you would be!"

When the old woman saw my travelling companion an exclamation of surprise escaped her. "Ah! Señor Don José!" she cried.

Don José frowned and lifted his hand with a gesture of authority that forthwith silenced the old dame.

I turned to my guide and gave him to understand, by a sign that no one else perceived, that I knew all about the man in whose company I was about to spend the night. Our supper was better than I expected. On a little table, only a foot high, we were served with an old rooster, fricasseed with rice and numerous peppers, then more peppers in oil, and finally a *gaspacho*—a sort of salad made of peppers. These three highly spiced dishes involved our frequent re-

course to a goatskin filled with Montella wine, which struck us as being delicious.

After our meal was over, I caught sight of a mandolin hanging up against the wall—in Spain you see mandolins in every corner—and I asked the little girl, who had been waiting on us, if she knew how to play it.

"No," she replied. "But Don José does play well!"

"Do me the kindness to sing me something," I said to him, "I'm passionately fond of your national music."

"I can't refuse to do anything for such a charming gentleman, who gives me such excellent cigars," responded Don José gaily, and having made the child give him the mandolin, he sang to his own accompaniment. His voice, though rough, was pleasing, the air he sang was strange and sad. As to the words, I could not understand a single one of them.

"If I am not mistaken," said I, "that's not a Spanish air you have just been singing. It's like the *zorzicos* I've heard in the Provinces,* and the words must be in the Basque language."

"Yes," said Don José, with a gloomy look.

* The *privileged Provinces*, Alava, Biscay, Guipuzcoa, and a part of Navarre, which all enjoy special *fueros*. The Basque language is spoken in these countries.

He laid the mandolin down on the ground, and began staring with a peculiarly sad expression at the dying fire. His face, at once fierce and noble-looking, reminded me, as the firelight fell on it, of Milton's Satan. Like him, perchance, my comrade was musing over the home he had forfeited, the exile he had earned, by some misdeed. I tried to revive the conversation, but so absorbed was he in melancholy thought, that he gave me no answer.

The old woman had already gone to rest in a corner of the room, behind a ragged rug hung on a rope. The little girl had followed her into this retreat, sacred to the fair sex. Then my guide rose, and suggested that I should go with him to the stable. But at the word Don José, waking, as it were, with a start, inquired sharply whither he was going.

"To the stable," answered my guide.

"What for? the horses have been fed! You can sleep here. The señor will give you leave."

"I'm afraid the señor's horse is sick. I'd like the señor to see it. Perhaps he'd know what should be done for it."

It was quite clear to me that Antonio wanted to speak to me apart.

But I did not care to rouse Don José's suspicions, and being as we were, I thought far the

wisest course for me was to appear absolutely confident.

I therefore told Antonio that I knew nothing on earth about horses, and that I was desperately sleepy. Don José followed him to the stable, and soon returned alone. He told me there was nothing the matter with the horse, but that my guide considered the animal such a treasure that he was scrubbing it with his jacket to make it sweat, and expected to spend the night in that pleasing occupation. Meanwhile I had stretched myself out on the mule rugs, having carefully wrapped myself up in my own cloak, so as to avoid touching them. Don José, having begged me to excuse the liberty he took in placing himself so near me, lay down across the door, but not until he had primed his blunderbuss afresh and carefully laid it under the wallet, which served him as a pillow.

I had thought I was so tired that I should be able to sleep even in such a lodging. But within an hour a most unpleasant itching sensation roused me from my first nap. As soon as I realised its nature, I rose to my feet, feeling convinced I should do far better to spend the rest of the night in the open air than beneath that inhospitable roof. Walking tiptoe I reached the door, stepped over Don José, who was sleep-

ing the sleep of the just, and managed so well that I got outside the building without waking him. Just beside the door there was a wide wooden bench. I lay down upon it, and settled myself, as best I could, for the remainder of the night. I was just closing my eyes for the second time when I fancied I saw the shadow of a man and then the shadow of a horse moving absolutely noiselessly, one behind the other. I sat upright, and then I thought I recognised Antonio. Surprised to see him outside the stable at such an hour, I got up and went toward him. He had seen me first, and had stopped to wait for me.

"Where is he?" Antonio inquired in a low tone.

"In the *venta*. He's asleep. The bugs don't trouble him. But what are you going to do with that horse?" I then noticed that, to stifle all noise as he moved out of the shed, Antonio had carefully muffled the horse's feet in the rags of an old blanket.

"Speak lower, for God's sake," said Antonio. "You don't know who that man is. He's José Navarro, the most noted bandit in Andalusia. I've been making signs to you all day long, and you wouldn't understand."

"What do I care whether he's a brigand or

not," I replied. "He hasn't robbed us, and I'll wager he doesn't want to."

"That may be. But there are two hundred ducats on his head. Some lancers are stationed in a place I know, a league and a half from here, and before daybreak I'll bring a few brawny fellows back with me. I'd have taken his horse away, but the brute's so savage that nobody but Navarro can go near it."

"Devil take you!" I cried. "What harm has the poor fellow done you that you should want to inform against him? And besides, are you certain he is the brigand you take him for?"

"Perfectly certain! He came after me into the stable just now, and said, 'You seem to know me. If you tell that good gentleman who I am, I'll blow your brains out!' You stay here, sir, keep close to him. You've nothing to fear. As long as he knows you are there, he won't suspect anything."

As we talked, we had moved so far from the *venta* that the noise of the horse's hoofs could not be heard there. In a twinkling Antonio snatched off the rags he had wrapped around the creature's feet, and was just about to climb on its back. In vain did I attempt with prayers and threats to restrain him.

"I'm only a poor man, señor," quoth he,

"I can't afford to lose two hundred ducats—especially when I shall earn them by ridding the country of such vermin. But mind what you're about! If Navarro wakes up, he'll snatch at his blunderbuss, and then look out for yourself! I've gone too far now to turn back. Do the best you can for yourself!"

The villain was in his saddle already, he spurred his horse smartly, and I soon lost sight of them both in the darkness.

I was very angry with my guide, and terribly alarmed as well. After a moment's reflection, I made up my mind, and went back to the *venta*. Don José was still sound asleep, making up, no doubt, for the fatigue and sleeplessness of several days of adventure. I had to shake him roughly before I could wake him up. Never shall I forget his fierce look, and the spring he made to get hold of his blunderbuss, which, as a precautionary measure, I had removed to some distance from his couch.

"Señor," I said, "I beg your pardon for disturbing you. But I have a silly question to ask you. Would you be glad to see half a dozen lancers walk in here?"

He bounded to his feet, and in an awful voice he demanded:

"Who told you?"

"It's little matter whence the warning comes, so long as it be good."

"Your guide has betrayed me—but he shall pay for it! Where is he?"

"I don't know. In the stable, I fancy. But somebody told me——"

"Who told you? It can't be the old hag——"

"Some one I don't know. Without more parleying, tell me, yes or no, have you any reason for not waiting till the soldiers come? If you have any, lose no time! If not, good-night to you, and forgive me for having disturbed your slumbers!"

"Ah, your guide! your guide! I had my doubts of him at first—but—I'll settle with him! Farewell, señor. May God reward you for the service I owe you! I am not quite so wicked as you think me. Yes, I still have something in me that an honest man may pity. Farewell, señor! I have only one regret—that I can not pay my debt to you!"

"As a reward for the service I have done you, Don José, promise me you'll suspect nobody—nor seek for vengeance. Here are some cigars for your journey. Good luck to you." And I held out my hand to him.

He squeezed it, without a word, took up his

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Etched by A. Nargeot from a drawing by S. Arcos.

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He squeezed it with a fresh [illegible] took up his

wallet and blunderbuss, and after saying a few words to the old woman in a lingo that I could not understand, he ran out to the shed. A few minutes later I heard him galloping out into the country.

As for me, I lay down again on my bench, but I did not go to sleep again. I queried in my own mind whether I had done right to save a robber, and possibly a murderer, from the gallows, simply and solely because I had eaten ham and rice in his company. Had I not betrayed my guide, who was supporting the cause of law and order? Had I not exposed him to a ruffian's vengeance? But then, what about the laws of hospitality?

"A mere savage prejudice," said I to myself. "I shall have to answer for all the crimes this brigand may commit in future." Yet is that instinct of the conscience which resists every argument really a prejudice? It may be I could not have escaped from the delicate position in which I found myself without remorse of some kind. I was still tossed to and fro, in the greatest uncertainty as to the morality of my behaviour, when I saw half a dozen horsemen ride up, with Antonio prudently lagging behind them. I went to meet them, and told them the brigand had fled over two hours previously The

old woman, when she was questioned by the sergeant, admitted that she knew Navarro, but said that living alone, as she did, she would never have dared to risk her life by informing against him. She added that when he came to her house, he habitually went away in the middle of the night. I, for my part, was made to ride to a place some leagues away, where I showed my passport, and signed a declaration before the *Alcalde*. This done, I was allowed to recommence my archæological investigations. Antonio was sulky with me; suspecting it was I who had prevented his earning those two hundred ducats. Nevertheless, we parted good friends at Cordova, where I gave him as large a gratuity as the state of my finances would permit.

II

I SPENT several days at Cordova. I had been told of a certain manuscript in the library of the Dominican convent which was likely to furnish me with very interesting details about the ancient Munda. The good fathers gave me the most kindly welcome. I spent the daylight hours within their convent, and at night I walked about the town. At Cordova a great many

idlers collect, toward sunset, on the quay that runs along the right bank of the Guadalquivir. Promenaders on the spot have to breathe the odour of a tanyard which still keeps up the ancient fame of the country in connection with the curing of leather. But to atone for this, they enjoy a sight which has a charm of its own. A few minutes before the Angelus bell rings, a great company of women gathers beside the river, just below the quay, which is rather a high one. Not a man would dare to join its ranks. The moment the Angelus rings, darkness is supposed to have fallen. As the last stroke sounds, all the women disrobe and step into the water. Then there is laughing and screaming, and a wonderful clatter. The men on the upper quay watch the bathers, straining their eyes, and seeing very little. Yet the white uncertain outlines perceptible against the dark-blue waters of the stream stir the poetic mind, and the possessor of a little fancy finds it not difficult to imagine that Diana and her nymphs are bathing below, while he himself runs no risk of ending like Acteon.

I have been told that one day a party of good-for-nothing fellows banded themselves together, and bribed the bell-ringer at the cathedral to ring the Angelus some twenty minutes before the proper hour. Though it was still

broad daylight, the nymphs of the Guadalquivir never hesitated, and putting far more trust in the Angelus bell than in the sun, they proceeded to their bathing toilette—always of the simplest—with an easy conscience. I was not present on that occasion. In my day, the bell-ringer was incorruptible, the twilight was very dim, and nobody but a cat could have distinguished the difference between the oldest orange woman, and the prettiest shop-girl, in Cordova.

One evening after it had grown quite dusk, I was leaning over the parapet of the quay, smoking, when a woman came up the steps leading from the river, and sat down near me. In her hair she wore a great bunch of jasmine—a flower which, at night, exhales a most intoxicating perfume. She was dressed simply, almost poorly, in black, as most work-girls are dressed in the evening. Women of the richer class only wear black in the daytime, at night they dress *à la francesa.* When she drew near me, the woman let the mantilla which had covered her head drop on her shoulders, and "by the dim light falling from the stars" I perceived her to be young, short in stature, well-proportioned, and with very large eyes. I threw my cigar away at once. She appreciated this mark of courtesy, essentially French, and hastened to in-

form me that she was very fond of the smell of tobacco, and that she even smoked herself, when she could get very mild *papelitos*. I fortunately happened to have some such in my case, and at once offered them to her. She condescended to take one, and lighted it at a burning string which a child brought us, receiving a copper for its pains. We mingled our smoke, and talked so long, the fair lady and I, that we ended by being almost alone upon the quay. I thought I might venture, without impropriety, to suggest our going to eat an ice at the *nevería*.* After a moment of modest demur, she agreed. But before finally accepting, she desired to know what o'clock it was. I struck my repeater, and this seemed to astound her greatly.

"What clever inventions you foreigners do have! What country do you belong to, sir? You're an Englishman, no doubt!" †

"I'm a Frenchman, and your devoted servant. And you, señorita, or señora, you probably belong to Cordova?"

"No."

* A *café* to which a depot of ice, or rather of snow, is attached. There is hardly a village in Spain without its *nevería*.

† Every traveller in Spain who does not carry about samples of calicoes and silks is taken for an Englishman (*inglesito*). It is the same thing in the East. At Chalcis I had the honour of being announced as a Μιλόρδος Φραντσέος.

"At all events, you are an Andalusian? Your soft way of speaking makes me think so."

"If you notice people's accent so closely, you must be able to guess what I am."

"I think you are from the country of Jesus, two paces out of Paradise."

I had learned this metaphor, which stands for Andalusia, from my friend Francisco Sevilla, a well-known *picador*.

"Pshaw! The people here say there is no place in Paradise for us!"

"Then perhaps you are of Moorish blood—or——" I stopped, not venturing to add "a Jewess."

"Oh come! You must see I'm a gipsy! Wouldn't you like me to tell you *la baji?* * Did you never hear tell of Carmencita? That's who I am!"

I was such a miscreant in those days—now fifteen years ago—that the close proximity of a sorceress did not make me recoil in horror. "So be it!" I thought. "Last week I ate my supper with a highway robber. To-day I'll go and eat ices with a servant of the devil. A traveller should see everything." I had yet another motive for prosecuting her acquaintance. When I left college—I acknowledge it with shame—I

* Your fortune.

had wasted a certain amount of time in studying occult science, and had even attempted, more than once, to exorcise the powers of darkness. Though I had been cured, long since, of my passions for such investigations, I still felt a certain attraction and curiosity with regard to all superstitions, and I was delighted to have this opportunity of discovering how far the magic art had developed among the gipsies.

Talking as we went, we had reached the *nevería*, and seated ourselves at a little table, lighted by a taper protected by a glass globe. I then had time to take a leisurely view of my *gitana*, while several worthy individuals, who were eating their ices, stared open-mouthed at beholding me in such gay company.

I very much doubt whether the Señorita Carmen was a pure-blooded gipsy. At all events, she was infinitely prettier than any other woman of her race I have ever seen. For a woman to be beautiful, they say in Spain, she must fulfil thirty *ifs*, or, if it please you better, you must be able to define her appearance by ten adjectives, applicable to three portions of her person.

For instance, three things about her must be black, her eyes, her eyelashes, and her eyebrows. Three must be dainty, her fingers, her lips, her hair, and so forth. For the rest of this inven-

tory, see Brantôme. My gipsy girl could lay no claim to so many perfections. Her skin, though perfectly smooth, was almost of a copper hue. Her eyes were set obliquely in her head, but they were magnificent and large. Her lips, a little full, but beautifully shaped, revealed a set of teeth as white as newly skinned almonds. Her hair—a trifle coarse, perhaps—was black, with blue lights on it like a raven's wing, long and glossy. Not to weary my readers with too prolix a description, I will merely add, that to every blemish she united some advantage, which was perhaps all the more evident by contrast. There was something strange and wild about her beauty. Her face astonished you, at first sight, but nobody could forget it. Her eyes, especially, had an expression of mingled sensuality and fierceness which I had never seen in any other human glance. "Gipsy's eye, wolf's eye!" is a Spanish saying which denotes close observation. If my readers have no time to go to the "Jardin des Plantes" to study the wolf's expression, they will do well to watch the ordinary cat when it is lying in wait for a sparrow.

It will be understood that I should have looked ridiculous if I had proposed to have my fortune told in a *café*. I therefore begged the

pretty witch's leave to go home with her. She made no difficulties about consenting, but she wanted to known what o'clock it was again, and requested me to make my repeater strike once more.

"Is it really gold?" she said, gazing at it with rapt attention.

When we started off again, it was quite dark. Most of the shops were shut, and the streets were almost empty. We crossed the bridge over the Guadalquivir, and at the far end of the suburb we stopped in front of a house of anything but palatial appearance. The door was opened by a child, to whom the gipsy spoke a few words in a language unknown to me, which I afterward understood to be *Romany*, or *chipe calli* —the gipsy idiom. The child instantly disappeared, leaving us in sole possession of a tolerably spacious room, furnished with a small table, two stools, and a chest. I must not forget to mention a jar of water, a pile of oranges, and a bunch of onions.

As soon as we were left alone, the gipsy produced, out of her chest, a pack of cards, bearing signs of constant usage, a magnet, a dried chameleon, and a few other indispensable adjuncts of her art. Then she bade me cross my left hand with a silver coin, and the magic

ceremonies duly began. It is unnecessary to chronicle her predictions, and as for the style of her performance, it proved her to be no mean sorceress.

Unluckily we were soon disturbed. The door was suddenly burst open, and a man, shrouded to the eyes in a brown cloak, entered the room, apostrophising the gipsy in anything but gentle terms. What he said I could not catch, but the tone of his voice revealed the fact that he was in a very evil temper. The gipsy betrayed neither surprise nor anger at his advent, but she ran to meet him, and with a most striking volubility, she poured out several sentences in the mysterious language she had already used in my presence. The word *payllo*, frequently reiterated, was the only one I understood. I knew that the gipsies use it to describe all men not of their own race. Concluding myself to be the subject of this discourse, I was prepared for a somewhat delicate explanation. I had already laid my hand on the leg of one of the stools, and was studying within myself to discover the exact moment at which I had better throw it at his head, when, roughly pushing the gipsy to one side, the man advanced toward me. Then with a step backward he cried:

"What, sir! is it you?"

I looked at him in my turn and recognised my friend Don José. At that moment I did feel rather sorry I had saved him from the gallows.

"What, is it you, my good fellow?" I exclaimed, with as easy a smile as I could muster. "You have interrupted this young lady just when she was foretelling me most interesting things!"

"The same as ever. There shall be an end to it!" he hissed between his teeth, with a savage glance at her.

Meanwhile the *gitana* was still talking to him in her own tongue. She became more and more excited. Her eyes grew fierce and bloodshot, her features contracted, she stamped her foot. She seemed to me to be earnestly pressing him to do something he was unwilling to do. What this was I fancied I understood only too well, by the fashion in which she kept drawing her little hand backward and forward under her chin. I was inclined to think she wanted to have somebody's throat cut, and I had a fair suspicion the throat in question was my own. To all her torrent of eloquence Don José's only reply was two or three shortly spoken words. At this the gipsy cast a glance of the most utter scorn at him, then, seating herself Turkish-

fashion in a corner of the room, she picked out an orange, tore off the skin, and began to eat it.

Don José took hold of my arm, opened the door, and led me into the street. We walked some two hundred paces in the deepest silence. Then he stretched out his hand.

"Go straight on," he said, "and you'll come to the bridge."

That instant he turned his back on me and departed at a great pace. I took my way back to my inn, rather crestfallen, and considerably out of temper. The worst of all was that, when I undressed, I discovered my watch was missing.

Various considerations prevented me from going to claim it next day, or requesting the *Corregidor* to be good enough to have a search made for it. I finished my work on the Dominican manuscript, and went on to Seville. After several months spent wandering hither and thither in Andalusia, I wanted to get back to Madrid, and with that object I had to pass through Cordova. I had no intention of making any stay there, for I had taken a dislike to that fair city, and to the ladies who bathed in the Guadalquivir. Nevertheless, I had some visits to pay, and certain errands to do, which must detain me several days in the old capital of the Mussulman princes.

The moment I made my appearance in the Dominican convent, one of the monks, who had always shown the most lively interest in my inquiries as to the site of the battlefield of Munda, welcomed me with open arms, exclaiming:

"Praised be God! You are welcome! my dear friend! We all thought you were dead, and I myself have said many a *pater* and *ave* (not that I regret them!) for your soul. Then you weren't murdered, after all? That you were robbed, we know!"

"What do you mean?" I asked, rather astonished.

"Oh, you know! That splendid repeater you used to strike in the library whenever we said it was time for us to go into church. Well, it has been found, and you'll get it back."

"Why," I broke in, rather put out of countenance, "I lost it——"

"The rascal's under lock and key, and as he was known to be a man who would shoot any Christian for the sake of a *peseta*, we were most dreadfully afraid he had killed you. I'll go with you to the *Corregidor*, and he'll give you back your fine watch. And after that, you won't dare to say the law doesn't do its work properly in Spain."

"I assure you," said I, "I'd far rather lose

my watch than have to give evidence in court to hang a poor unlucky devil, and especially because—because——"

"Oh, you needn't be alarmed! He's thoroughly done for; they might hang him twice over. But when I say hang, I say wrong. Your thief is an *Hidalgo*. So he's to be garrotted the day after to-morrow, without fail.* So you see one theft more or less won't affect his position. Would to God he had done nothing but steal! But he has committed several murders, one more hideous than the other."

"What's his name?"

"In this country he is only known as José Navarro, but he has another Basque name, which neither you nor I will ever be able to pronounce. By the way, the man is worth seeing, and you, who like to study the peculiar features of each country, shouldn't lose this chance of noting how a rascal bids farewell to this world in Spain. He is in jail, and Father Martinez will take you to him."

So bent was my Dominican friend on my seeing the preparations for this "neat little hanging job" that I was fain to agree. I went to see the prisoner, having provided myself with

* In 1830, the noble class still enjoyed this privilege. Nowadays, under the constitutional *régime*, commoners have attained the same dignity.

a bundle of cigars, which I hoped might induce him to forgive my intrusion.

I was ushered into Don José's presence just as he was sitting at table. He greeted me with a rather distant nod, and thanked me civilly for the present I had brought him. Having counted the cigars in the bundle I had placed in his hand, he took out a certain number and returned me the rest, remarking that he would not need any more of them.

I inquired whether by laying out a little money, or by applying to my friends, I might not do something to soften his lot. He shrugged his shoulders, to begin with, smiling sadly. Soon, as by an after-thought, he asked me to have a mass said for the repose of his soul.

Then he added nervously: "Would you—would you have another said for a person who did you a wrong?"

"Assuredly I will, my dear fellow," I answered. "But no one in this country has wronged me so far as I know."

He took my hand and squeezed it, looking very grave. After a moment's silence, he spoke again.

"Might I dare to ask another service of you? When you go back to your own country perhaps you will pass through Navarre. At all

events you'll go by Vittoria, which isn't very far off."

"Yes," said I, "I shall certainly pass through Vittoria. But I may very possibly go round by Pampeluna, and for your sake, I believe I should be very glad to do it."

"Well, if you do go to Pampeluna, you'll see more than one thing that will interest you. It's a fine town. I'll give you this medal," he showed me a little silver medal that he wore hung around his neck. "You'll wrap it up in paper"—he paused a moment to master his emotion—"and you'll take it, or send it, to an old lady whose address I'll give you. Tell her I am dead—but don't tell her how I died."

I promised to perform his commission. I saw him the next day, and spent part of it in his company. From his lips I learned the sad incidents that follow.

III

"I WAS born," he said, "at Elizondo, in the valley of Baztan. My name is Don José Lizzarrabengoa, and you know enough of Spain, sir, to know at once, by my name, that I come of an old Christian and Basque stock. I call

myself Don, because I have a right to it, and if I were at Elizondo I could show you my parchment genealogy. My family wanted me to go into the church, and made me study for it, but I did not like work. I was too fond of playing tennis, and that was my ruin. When we Navarrese begin to play tennis, we forget everything else. One day, when I had won the game, a young fellow from Alava picked a quarrel with me. We took to our *maquilas,** and I won again. But I had to leave the neighbourhood. I fell in with some dragoons, and enlisted in the Almanza Cavalry Regiment. Mountain folks like us soon learn to be soldiers. Before long I was a corporal, and I had been told I should soon be made a sergeant, when, to my misfortune, I was put on guard at the Seville Tobacco Factory. If you have been to Seville you have seen the great building, just outside the ramparts, close to the Guadalquivir; I can fancy I see the entrance, and the guard room just beside it, even now. When Spanish soldiers are on duty, they either play cards or go to sleep. I, like an honest Navarrese, always tried to keep myself busy. I was making a chain to hold my priming-pin, out of a bit of wire: all at once, my comrades said, ' There's the bell ringing, the

* Iron-shod sticks used by the Basques.

girls are coming back to work.' You must know, sir, that there are quite four or five hundred women employed in the factory. They roll the cigars in a great room into which no man can go without a permit from the *Veintiquatro*,* because when the weather is hot they make themselves at home, especially the young ones. When the work-girls come back after their dinner, numbers of young men go down to see them pass by, and talk all sorts of nonsense to them. Very few of those young ladies will refuse a silk mantilla, and men who care for that sort of sport have nothing to do but bend down and pick their fish up. While the others watched the girls go by, I stayed on my bench near the door. I was a young fellow then—my heart was still in my own country, and I didn't believe in any pretty girls who hadn't blue skirts and long plaits of hair falling on their shoulders.† And besides, I was rather afraid of the Andalusian women. I had not got used to their ways yet; they were always jeering one—never spoke a single word of sense. So I was sitting with my nose down upon my chain, when I heard some bystanders say, 'Here comes the *gitanella!*'

* Magistrate in charge of the municipal police arrangements, and local government regulations.

† The costume usually worn by peasant women in Navarre and the Basque Provinces.

Then I lifted up my eyes, and I saw her! It was on a Friday, and I shall never forget it. I saw that very Carmen you know, and in whose room I met you a few months ago.

"She was wearing a very short red skirt, below which her white silk stockings—with more than one hole in them—and her dainty red morocco shoes, fastened with flame-coloured ribbons, were clearly seen. She had thrown her mantilla back, to show her shoulders, and a great bunch of acacia that was thrust into her chemise. She had another acacia blossom in the corner of her mouth, and she walked along, swaying her hips, like a filly from the Cordova stud farm. In my country anybody who had seen a woman dressed in that fashion would have crossed himself. At Seville every man paid her some bold compliment on her appearance. She had an answer for each and all, with her hand on her hip, as bold as the thorough gipsy she was. At first I didn't like her looks, and I fell to my work again. But she, like all women and cats, who won't come if you call them, and do come if you don't call them, stopped short in front of me, and spoke to me.

"'*Compadre*,' said she, in the Andalusian fashion, 'won't you give me your chain for the keys of my strong box?'

"'It's for my priming-pin,' said I.

"'Your priming-pin!' she cried, with a laugh. 'Oho! I suppose the gentleman makes lace, as he wants pins!'

"Everybody began to laugh, and I felt myself getting red in the face, and couldn't hit on anything in answer.

"'Come, my love!' she began again, 'make me seven ells of lace for my mantilla, my pet pin-maker!'

"And taking the acacia blossom out of her mouth she flipped it at me with her thumb so that it hit me just between the eyes. I tell you, sir, I felt as if a bullet had struck me. I didn't know which way to look. I sat stock-still, like a wooden board. When she had gone into the factory, I saw the acacia blossom, which had fallen on the ground between my feet. I don't know what made me do it, but I picked it up, unseen by any of my comrades, and put it carefully inside my jacket. That was my first folly.

"Two or three hours later I was still thinking about her, when a panting, terrified-looking porter rushed into the guard-room. He told us a woman had been stabbed in the great cigar-room, and that the guard must be sent in at once. The sergeant told me to take two men, and go and see to it. I took my two men and

went upstairs. Imagine, sir, that when I got into the room, I found, to begin with, some three hundred women, stripped to their shifts, or very near it, all of them screaming and yelling and gesticulating, and making such a row that you couldn't have heard God's own thunder. On one side of the room one of the women was lying on the broad of her back, streaming with blood, with an X newly cut on her face by two strokes of a knife. Opposite the wounded woman, whom the best-natured of the band were attending, I saw Carmen, held by five or six of her comrades. The wounded woman was crying out, 'A confessor, a confessor! I'm killed!' Carmen said nothing at all. She clinched her teeth and rolled her eyes like a chameleon. 'What's this?' I asked. I had hard work to find out what had happened, for all the work-girls talked at once. It appears that the injured girl had boasted she had money enough in her pocket to buy a donkey at the Triana Market. 'Why,' said Carmen, who had a tongue of her own, 'can't you do with a broom?' Stung by this taunt, it may be because she felt herself rather unsound in that particular, the other girl replied that she knew nothing about brooms, seeing she had not the honour of being either a gipsy or one of the devil's godchildren, but that

the Señorita Carmen would shortly make acquaintance with her donkey, when the *Corregidor* took her out riding with two lackeys behind her to keep the flies off. 'Well,' retorted Carmen, 'I'll make troughs for the flies to drink out of on your cheeks, and I'll paint a draughtboard on them!' * And thereupon, slap, bang! she began making St. Andrew's crosses on the girl's face with a knife she had been using for cutting off the ends of the cigars.

"The case was quite clear. I took hold of Carmen's arm. 'Sister mine,' I said civilly, 'you must come with me.' She shot a glance of recognition at me, but she said, with a resigned look: 'Let's be off. Where is my mantilla?' She put it over her head so that only one of her great eyes was to be seen, and followed my two men, as quiet as a lamb. When we got to the guard-room the sergeant said it was a serious job, and he must send her to prison. I was told off again to take her there. I put her between two dragoons, as a corporal does on such occasions. We started off for the town. The gipsy had begun by holding her tongue. But when we got to the *Calle de la Serpiente*—you know

* *Pintar un javeque*, "paint a xebec," a particular type of ship. Most Spanish vessels of this description have a checkered red and white stripe painted around them.

it, and that it earns its name by its many windings—she began by dropping her mantilla on to her shoulders, so as to show me her coaxing little face, and turning round to me as well as she could, she said:

"'*Oficial mío,* where are you taking me to?'

"'To prison, my poor child,' I replied, as gently as I could, just as any kind-hearted soldier is bound to speak to a prisoner, and especially to a woman.

"'Alack! what will become of me! Señor Oficial, have pity on me! You are so young, so good-looking.' Then, in a lower tone, she said, 'Let me get away, and I'll give you a bit of the *bar lachi,* that will make every woman fall in love with you!'

"The *bar lachi,* sir, is the loadstone, with which the gipsies declare one who knows how to use it can cast any number of spells. If you can make a woman drink a little scrap of it, powdered, in a glass of white wine, she'll never be able to resist you. I answered, as gravely as I could:

"'We are not here to talk nonsense. You'll have to go to prison. Those are my orders, and there's no help for it!'

"We men from the Basque country have an accent which all Spaniards easily recognise; on

the other hand, not one of them can ever learn to say *Baï, jaona !* *

" So Carmen easily guessed I was from the Provinces. You know, sir, that the gipsies, who belong to no particular country, and are always moving about, speak every language, and most of them are quite at home in Portugal, in France, in our Provinces, in Catalonia, or anywhere else. They can even make themselves understood by Moors and English people. Carmen knew Basque tolerably well.

" ' *Laguna ene bihotsarena,* comrade of my heart,' said she suddenly. ' Do you belong to our country? '

" Our language is so beautiful, sir, that when we hear it in a foreign country it makes us quiver. I wish," added the bandit in a lower tone, " I could have a confessor from my own country."

After a silence, he began again.

" ' I belong to Elizondo,' I answered in Basque, very much affected by the sound of my own language.

" ' I come from Etchalar,' said she (that's a district about four hours' journey from my home). ' I was carried off to Seville by the gipsies. I was working in the factory to earn

* Yes, sir.

enough money to take me back to Navarre, to my poor old mother, who has no support in the world but me, besides her little *barratcea* * with twenty cider-apple trees in it. Ah! if I were only back in my own country, looking up at the white mountains! I have been insulted here, because I don't belong to this land of rogues and sellers of rotten oranges; and those hussies are all banded together against me, because I told them that not all their Seville *jacques*,† and all their knives, would frighten an honest lad from our country, with his blue cap and his *maquila!* Good comrade, won't you do anything to help your own countrywoman?'

"She was lying then, sir, as she has always lied. I don't know that that girl ever spoke a word of truth in her life, but when she did speak, I believed her—I couldn't help myself. She mangled her Basque words, and I believed she came from Navarre. But her eyes and her mouth and her skin were enough to prove she was a gipsy. I was mad, I paid no more attention to anything, I thought to myself that if the Spaniards had dared to speak evil of my country, I would have slashed their faces just as she had slashed her comrade's. In short, I was like a drunken man, I was beginning to

* Field, garden. † Bravos, boasters.

say foolish things, and I was very near doing them.

"'If I were to give you a push and you tumbled down, good fellow-countryman,' she began again in Basque, 'those two Castilian recruits wouldn't be able to keep me back.'

"Faith, I forgot my orders, I forgot everything, and I said to her, 'Well, then, my friend, girl of my country, try it, and may our Lady of the Mountain help you through.'

"Just at that moment we were passing one of the many narrow lanes one sees in Seville. All at once Carmen turned and struck me in the chest with her fist. I tumbled down backward, purposely. With a bound she sprang over me, and ran off, showing us a pair of legs! People talk about a pair of Basque legs! but hers were far better—as fleet as they were well-turned. As for me, I picked myself up at once, but I stuck out my lance * crossways and barred the street, so that my comrades were checked at the very first moment of pursuit. Then I started to run myself, and they after me—but how were we to catch her? There was no fear of that, what with our spurs, our swords, and our lances.

"In less time than I have taken to tell you

* All Spanish cavalry soldiers carry lances.

the story, the prisoner had disappeared. And besides, every gossip in the quarter covered her flight, poked scorn at us, and pointed us in the wrong direction. After a good deal of marching and countermarching, we had to go back to the guard-room without a receipt from the governor of the jail.

" To avoid punishment, my men made known that Carmen had spoken to me in Basque; and to tell the truth, it did not seem very natural that a blow from such a little creature should have so easily overthrown a strong fellow like me. The whole thing looked suspicious, or, at all events, not over-clear. When I came off guard I lost my corporal's stripes, and was condemned to a month's imprisonment. It was the first time I had been punished since I had been in the service. Farewell, now, to the sergeant's stripes, on which I had reckoned so surely!

" The first days in prison were very dreary. When I enlisted I had fancied I was sure to become an officer, at all events. Two of my compatriots, Longa and Mina, are captains-general, after all. Chapalangarra was a negro, like Mina, and also like him a refugee from his country. Chapalangarra was a colonel, and I have played tennis a score of times with his brother, who was just a needy fellow like my-

self. 'Now,' I kept crying to myself, 'all the time you served without being punished has been lost. Now you have a bad mark against your name, and to get yourself back into the officers' good graces you'll have to work ten times as hard as when you joined as a recruit.' And why have I got myself punished? For the sake of a gipsy hussy, who made game of me, and who at this moment is busy thieving in some corner of the town. Yet I couldn't help thinking about her. Will you believe it, sir, those silk stockings of hers with the holes in them, of which she had given me such a full view as she took to her heels, were always before my eyes? I used to look through the barred windows of the jail into the street, and among all the women who passed I never could see one to compare with that minx of a girl—and then, in spite of myself, I used to smell the acacia blossom she had thrown at me, and which, dry as it was, still kept its sweet scent. If there are such things as witches, that girl certainly was one.

"One day the jailer came in, and gave me an Alcala roll.*

* *Alcala de los Panaderos*, a village two leagues from Seville, where the most delicious rolls are made. They are said to owe their quality to the water of the place, and great quantities of them are brought to Seville every day.

"'Look here,' said he, 'this is what your cousin has sent you.'

"I took the loaf, very much astonished, for I had no cousin in Seville. It may be a mistake, thought I, as I looked at the roll, but it was so appetising and smelt so good, that I made up my mind to eat it, without troubling my head as to whence it came, or for whom it was really intended.

"When I tried to cut it, my knife struck on something hard. I looked, and found a little English file, which had been slipped into the dough before the roll had been baked. The roll also contained a gold piece of two piastres. Then I had no further doubt—it was a present from Carmen. To people of her blood, liberty is everything, and they would set a town on fire to save themselves one day in prison. The girl was artful, indeed, and armed with that roll, I might have snapped my fingers at the jailers. In one hour, with that little file, I could have sawn through the thickest bar, and with the gold coin I could have exchanged my soldier's cloak for civilian garb at the nearest shop. You may fancy that a man who had often taken the eaglets out of their nests in our cliff would have found no difficulty in getting down to the street out of a window less than

thirty feet above it. But I didn't choose to escape. I still had a soldier's code of honour, and desertion appeared to me in the light of a heinous crime. Yet this proof of remembrance touched me. When a man is in prison he likes to think he has a friend outside who takes an interest in him. The gold coin did rather offend me; I should have very much liked to return it; but where was I to find my creditor? That did not seem a very easy task.

"After the ceremony of my degradation I had fancied my sufferings were over, but I had another humiliation before me. That came when I had left prison, and was told off for duty, and put on sentry, as a private soldier. You can not conceive what a proud man endures at such a moment. I believe I would have just as soon been shot dead—then I should have marched alone at the head of my platoon, at all events; I should have felt I was somebody, with the eyes of others fixed upon me.

"I was posted as sentry at the door of the colonel's house. The colonel was a young man, rich, good-natured, fond of amusing himself. All the young officers were there, and many civilians as well, besides ladies—actresses, as it was said. For my part, it seemed to me as if

the whole town had agreed to meet at that door, in order to stare at me. Then up drove the colonel's carriage, with his valet on the box. And who should I see get out of it, but the gipsy girl! She was dressed up, this time, to the eyes, togged out in golden ribbons—a spangled gown, blue shoes, all spangled too, flowers and gold lace all over her. In her hand she carried a tambourine. With her there were two other gipsy women, one young and one old. They always have one old woman who goes with them, and then an old man with a guitar, a gipsy too, to play alone, and also for their dances. You must know these gipsy girls are often sent for to private houses, to dance their special dance, the *Romalis*, and often, too, for quite other purposes.

"Carmen recognised me, and we exchanged glances. I don't know why, but at that moment I should have liked to have been a hundred feet beneath the ground.

"'*Agur laguna,*'* said she. 'Oficial mío! You keep guard like a recruit,' and before I could find a word in answer, she was inside the house.

"The whole party was assembled in the *patio*, and in spite of the crowd I could see nearly

* Good-day, comrade!

everything that went on through the lattice.* I could hear the castanets and the tambourine, the laughter and applause. Sometimes I caught a glimpse of her head as she bounded upward with her tambourine. Then I could hear the officers saying many things to her which brought the blood to my face. As to her answers, I knew nothing of them. It was on that day, I think, that I began to love her in earnest—for three or four times I was tempted to rush into the *patio*, and drive my sword into the bodies of all the coxcombs who were making love to her. My torture lasted a full hour; then the gipsies came out, and the carriage took them away. As she passed me by, Carmen looked at me with those eyes you know, and said to me very low, 'Comrade, people who are fond of good *fritata* come to eat it at Lillas Pastia's at Triana!'

"Then, light as a kid, she stepped into the carriage, the coachman whipped up his mules, and the whole merry party departed, whither I know not.

*In most of the houses in Seville there is an inner court surrounded by an arched portico. This is used as a sitting-room in summer. Over the court is stretched a piece of tent cloth, which is watered during the day and removed at night. The street door is almost always left open, and the passage leading to the court (*zaguan*) is closed by an iron lattice of very elegant workmanship.

"You may fancy that the moment I was off guard I went to Triana; but first of all I got myself shaved and brushed myself up as if I had been going on parade. She was living with Lillas Pastia, an old fried-fish seller, a gipsy, as black as a Moor, to whose house a great many civilians resorted to eat *fritata*, especially, I think, because Carmen had taken up her quarters there.

"'Lillas,' she said, as soon as she saw me, 'I'm not going to work any more to-day. To-morrow will be a day, too.* Come, fellow-countryman, let us go for a walk!'

"She pulled her mantilla across her nose, and there we were in the street, without my knowing in the least whither I was bound.

"'Señorita,' said I, 'I think I have to thank you for a present I had while I was in prison. I've eaten the bread; the file will do for sharpening my lance, and I keep it in remembrance of you. But as for the money, here it is.'

"'Why, he's kept the money!' she exclaimed, bursting out laughing. 'But, after all, that's all the better—for I'm decidedly hard up! What matter! The dog that runs never

* *Mañana será otro día.*—A Spanish proverb.

starves!* Come, let's spend it all! You shall stand treat.'

"We had turned back toward Seville. At the entrance of the *Calle de la Serpiente* she bought a dozen oranges, which she made me put into my handkerchief. A little farther on she bought a roll, a sausage, and a bottle of manzanilla. Then, last of all, she turned into a confectioner's shop. There she threw the gold coin I had returned to her on the counter, with another she had in her pocket, and some small silver, and then she asked me for all the money I had. All I possessed was one peseta and a few cuartos, which I handed over to her, very much ashamed of not having more. I thought she would have carried away the whole shop. She took everything that was best and dearest, *yemas*,† *turon*,‡ preserved fruits—as long as the money lasted. And all these, too, I had to carry in paper bags. Perhaps you know the *Calle del Candilejo,* where there is a head of Don Pedro the Avenger.§ That head ought to

* *Chuquel sos pirela, cocal terela.* "The dog that runs finds a bone." —Gipsy proverb.

† Sugared yolks of eggs.

‡ A sort of nougat.

§ This king, Don Pedro, whom we call "the Cruel," and whom Queen Isabella, the Catholic, never called anything but "the Avenger," was fond of walking about the streets of Seville at night in search of adventures, like the Caliph Haroun al Raschid. One night, in a lonely street, he

have given me pause. We stopped at an old house in that street. She passed into the entry, and knocked at a door on the ground floor. It was opened by a gipsy, a thorough-paced servant of the devil. Carmen said a few words to her in Romany. At first the old hag grumbled. To smooth her down Carmen gave her a couple of oranges and a handful of sugar-plums, and let her have a taste of the wine. Then she hung

quarrelled with a man who was singing a serenade. There was a fight, and the king killed the amorous *caballero*. At the clashing of their swords, an old woman put her head out of the window and lighted up the scene with a tiny lamp (*candilejo*) which she held in her hand. My readers must be informed that King Don Pedro, though nimble and muscular, suffered from one strange fault in his physical conformation. Whenever he walked his knees cracked loudly. By this cracking the old woman easily recognised him.

The next day the *veintiquatro* in charge came to make his report to the king. "Sire, a duel was fought last night in such a street—one of the combatants is dead." "Have you found the murderer?" "Yes, sire." "Why has he not been punished already?" "Sire, I await your orders!" "Carry out the law." Now the king had just published a decree that every duellist was to have his head cut off, and that the head was to be set up on the scene of the fight. The *veintiquatro* got out of the difficulty like a clever man. He had the head sawed off a statue of the king, and set that up in a niche in the middle of the street in which the murder had taken place. The king and all the Sevillians thought this a very good joke. The street took its name from the lamp held by the old woman, the only witness of the incident. The above is the popular tradition. Zuñiga tells the story somewhat differently. (See Anales de Sevilla, vol. ii, p. 136). However that may be, a street called *Calle del Candilejo* still exists in Seville, and in that street there is a bust which is said to be a portrait of Don Pedro. This bust, unfortunately, is a modern production. During the seventeenth century the old one had become very much defaced, and the municipality had it replaced by that now to be seen.

her cloak on her back, and led her to the door, which she fastened with a wooden bar. As soon as we were alone she began to laugh and caper like a lunatic, singing out, 'You are my *rom*, I'm your *romi*.' *

"There I stood in the middle of the room, laden with all her purchases, and not knowing where I was to put them down. She tumbled them all onto the floor, and threw her arms round my neck, saying:

"'I pay my debts, I pay my debts! That's the law of the *Cales*.' †

"Ah, sir, that day! that day! When I think of it I forget what to-morrow must bring me!"

For a moment the bandit held his peace, then, when he had relighted his cigar, he began afresh.

"We spent the whole day together, eating, drinking, and so forth. When she had stuffed herself with sugar-plums, like any child of six years old, she thrust them by handfuls into the old woman's water-jar. 'That'll make sherbet for her,' she said. She smashed the *yemas* by throwing them against the walls. 'They'll keep the flies from bothering us.' There was no

* *Rom*, husband. *Romi*, wife.

† *Calo*, feminine *calli*, plural *cales*. Literally "black," the name the gipsies apply to themselves in their own language.

prank or wild frolic she didn't indulge in. I told her I should have liked to see her dance, only there were no castanets to be had. Instantly she seized the old woman's only earthenware plate, smashed it up, and there she was dancing the *Romalis*, and making the bits of broken crockery rattle as well as if they had been ebony and ivory castanets. That girl was good company, I can tell you! Evening fell, and I heard the drums beating tattoo.

"'I must get back to quarters for roll-call,' I said.

"'To quarters!' she answered, with a look of scorn. 'Are you a negro slave, to let yourself be driven with a ramrod like that! You are as silly as a canary-bird. Your dress suits your nature.* Pshaw! you've no more heart than a chicken.'

"I stayed on, making up my mind to the inevitable guard-room. The next morning the first suggestion of parting came from her.

"'Hark ye, Joseito,' she said. 'Have I paid you? By our law, I owed you nothing, because you're a *payllo*. But you're a good-looking fellow, and I took a fancy to you. Now we're quits. Good-day!'

"I asked her when I should see her again.

* Spanish dragoons wear a yellow uniform.

"'When you're less of a simpleton,' she retorted, with a laugh. Then, in a more serious tone, 'Do you know, my son, I really believe I love you a little; but that can't last! The dog and the wolf can't agree for long. Perhaps if you turned gipsy, I might care to be your *romi.* But that's all nonsense, such things aren't possible. Pshaw! my boy. Believe me, you're well out of it. You've come across the devil—he isn't always black—and you've not had your neck wrung. I wear a woollen suit, but I'm no sheep.* Go and burn a candle to your *majari,*† she deserves it well. Come, good-bye once more. Don't think any more about *La Carmencita,* or she'll end by making you marry a widow with wooden legs.' ‡

"As she spoke, she drew back the bar that closed the door, and once we were out in the street she wrapped her mantilla about her, and turned on her heel.

"She spoke truth. I should have done far better never to think of her again. But after that day in the *Calle del Candilejo* I couldn't think of anything else. All day long I used to walk about, hoping I might meet her. I sought

* *Me dicas vriardá de jorpoy, bus ne sino braco.*—A gipsy proverb.

† The Saint, the Holy Virgin.

‡ The gallows, which is the widow of the last man hanged upon it.

news of her from the old hag, and from the fried-fish seller. They both told me she had gone away to *Laloro*, which is their name for Portugal. They probably said it by Carmen's orders, but I soon found out they were lying. Some weeks after my day in the *Calle del Candilejo* I was on duty at one of the town gates. A little way from the gate there was a breach in the wall. The masons were working at it in the daytime, and at night a sentinel was posted on it, to prevent smugglers from getting in. All through one day I saw Lillas Pastia going backward and forward near the guard-room, and talking to some of my comrades. They all knew him well, and his fried fish and fritters even better. He came up to me, and asked if I had any news of Carmen.

"'No,' said I.

"'Well,' said he, 'you'll soon hear of her, old fellow.'

"He was not mistaken. That night I was posted to guard the breach in the wall. As soon as the sergeant had disappeared I saw a woman coming toward me. My heart told me it was Carmen. Still I shouted:

"'Keep off! Nobody can pass here!'

"'Now, don't be spiteful,' she said, making herself known to me.

"'What! you here, Carmen?'

"'Yes, *mi payllo*. Let us say few words, but wise ones. Would you like to earn a douro? Some people will be coming with bundles. Let them alone.'

"'No,' said I, 'I must not allow them through. These are my orders.'

"'Orders! orders! You didn't think about orders in the *Calle del Candilejo!*'

"'Ah!' I cried, quite maddened by the very thought of that night. 'It was well worth while to forget my orders for that! But I won't have any smuggler's money!'

"'Well, if you won't have money, shall we go and dine together at old Dorotea's?'

"'No,' said I, half choked by the effort it cost me. 'No, I can't.'

"'Very good! If you make so many difficulties, I know to whom I can go. I'll ask your officer if he'll come with me to Dorotea's. He looks good-natured, and he'll post a sentry who'll only see what he had better see. Good-bye, canary-bird! I shall have a good laugh the day the order comes out to hang you!'

"I was weak enough to call her back, and I promised to let the whole of gipsydom pass in, if that were necessary, so that I secured the only reward I longed for. She instantly swore

she would keep her word faithfully the very next day, and ran off to summon her friends, who were close by. There were five of them, of whom Pastia was one, all well loaded with English goods. Carmen kept watch for them. She was to warn them with her castanets the instant she caught sight of the patrol. But there was no necessity for that. The smugglers finished their job in a moment.

" The next day I went to the *Calle del Candilejo*. Carmen kept me waiting, and when she came, she was in rather a bad temper.

" ' I don't like people who have to be pressed,' she said. ' You did me a much greater service the first time, without knowing you'd gain anything by it. Yesterday you bargained with me. I don't know why I've come, for I don't care for you any more. Here, be off with you. Here's a douro for your trouble.'

" I very nearly threw the coin at her head, and I had to make a violent effort to prevent myself from actually beating her. After we had wrangled for an hour I went off in a fury. For some time I wandered about the town, walking hither and thither like a madman. At last I went into a church, and getting into the darkest corner I could find, I cried hot tears. All at once I heard a voice.

"'A dragoon in tears. I'll make a philter of them!'

"I looked up. There was Carmen in front of me.

"'Well, *mi payllo,* are you still angry with me?' she said. 'I must care for you in spite of myself, for since you left me I don't know what has been the matter with me. Look you, it is I who ask you to come to the *Calle del Candilejo,* now!'

"So we made it up: but Carmen's temper was like the weather in our country. The storm is never so close, in our mountains, as when the sun is at its brightest. She had promised to meet me again at Dorotea's, but she didn't come.

"And Dorotea began telling me again that she had gone off to Portugal about some gipsy business.

"As experience had already taught me how much of that I was to believe, I went about looking for Carmen wherever I thought she might be, and twenty times in every day I walked through the *Calle del Candilejo.* One evening I was with Dorotea, whom I had almost tamed by giving her a glass of anisette now and then, when Carmen walked in, followed by a young man, a lieutenant in our regiment.

"'Get away at once,' she said to me in

Basque. I stood there, dumfounded, my heart full of rage.

"'What are you doing here?' said the lieutenant to me. 'Take yourself off—get out of this.'

"I couldn't move a step. I felt paralysed, The officer grew angry, and seeing I did not go out, and had not even taken off my forage cap, he caught me by the collar and shook me roughly. I don't know what I said to him. He drew his sword, and I unsheathed mine. The old woman caught hold of my arm, and the lieutenant gave me a wound on the forehead, of which I still bear the scar. I made a step backward, and with one jerk of my elbow I threw old Dorotea down. Then, as the lieutenant still pressed me, I turned the point of my sword against his body, and he ran upon it. Then Carmen put out the lamp and told Dorotea, in her own language, to take to flight. I fled into the street myself, and began running along, I knew not whither. It seemed to me that some one was following me. When I came to myself I discovered that Carmen had never left me.

"'Great stupid of a canary-bird!' she said, 'you never make anything but blunders. And, indeed, you know I told you I should bring you bad luck. But come, there's a cure for every-

thing when you have a Fleming from Rome * for your love. Begin by rolling this handkerchief round your head, and throw me over that belt of yours. Wait for me in this alley—I'll be back in two minutes.'

"She disappeared, and soon came back bringing me a striped cloak which she had gone to fetch, I knew not whence. She made me take off my uniform, and put on the cloak over my shirt. Thus dressed, and with the wound on my head bound round with the handkerchief, I was tolerably like a Valencian peasant, many of whom come to Seville to sell a drink they make out of '*chufas.*' † Then she took me to a house very much like Dorotea's, at the bottom of a little lane. Here she and another gipsy woman washed and dressed my wounds, better than any army surgeon could have done, gave me something, I know not what, to drink, and finally made me lie down on a mattress, on which I went to sleep.

"Probably the women had mixed one of the

* *Flamenco de Roma*, a slang term for the gipsies. Roma does not stand for the Eternal City, but for the nation of the *romi*, or the married folk—a name applied by the gipsies to themselves. The first gipsies seen in Spain probably came from the Low Countries, hence their name of *Flemings*.

† A bulbous root, out of which rather a pleasant beverage is manufactured.

soporific drugs of which they know the secret in my drink, for I did not wake up till very late the next day. I was rather feverish, and had a violent headache. It was some time before the memory of the terrible scene in which I had taken part on the previous night came back to me. After having dressed my wound, Carmen and her friend, squatting on their heels beside my mattress, exchanged a few words of '*chipe calli*,' which appeared to me to be something in the nature of a medical consultation. Then they both of them assured me that I should soon be cured, but that I must get out of Seville at the earliest possible moment, for that, if I was caught there, I should most undoubtedly be shot.

"'My boy,' said Carmen to me, 'you'll have to do something. Now that the king won't give you either rice or haddock * you'll have to think of earning your livelihood. You're too stupid for stealing *à pastesas*.† But you are brave and active. If you have the pluck, take yourself off to the coast and turn smuggler. Haven't I promised to get you hanged? That's better than being shot, and besides, if you set about it properly, you'll live like a prince as

* The ordinary food of a Spanish soldier.

† *Ustilar à pastesas*, to steal cleverly, to purloin without violence.

long as the *miños* * and the coast-guard don't lay their hands on your collar.'

"In this attractive guise did this fiend of a girl describe the new career she was suggesting to me,—the only one, indeed, remaining, now I had incurred the penalty of death. Shall I confess it, sir? She persuaded me without much difficulty. This wild and dangerous life, it seemed to me, would bind her and me more closely together. In future, I thought, I should be able to make sure of her love.

"I had often heard talk of certain smugglers who travelled about Andalusia, each riding a good horse, with his mistress behind him and his blunderbuss in his fist. Already I saw myself trotting up and down the world, with a pretty gipsy behind me. When I mentioned that notion to her, she laughed till she had to hold her sides, and vowed there was nothing in the world so delightful as a night spent camping in the open air, when each *rom* retired with his *romi* beneath their little tent, made of three hoops with a blanket thrown across them.

"'If I take to the mountains,' said I to her, 'I shall be sure of you. There'll be no lieutenant there to go shares with me.'

"'Ha! ha! you're jealous!' she retorted,

* A sort of volunteer corps.

'so much the worse for you. How can you be such a fool as that? Don't you see I must love you, because I have never asked you for money?'

"When she said that sort of thing I could have strangled her.

"To shorten the story, sir, Carmen procured me civilian clothes, disguised in which I got out of Seville without being recognised. I went to Jerez, with a letter from Pastia to a dealer in anisette whose house was the smugglers' meeting-place. I was introduced to them, and their leader, surnamed *El Dancaïre*, enrolled me in his gang. We started for Gaucin, where I found Carmen, who had told me she would meet me there. In all these expeditions she acted as spy for our gang, and she was the best that ever was seen. She had now just returned from Gibraltar, and had already arranged with the captain of a ship for a cargo of English goods which we were to receive on the coast. We went to meet it near Estepona. We hid part in the mountains, and laden with the rest, we proceeded to Ronda. Carmen had gone there before us. It was she again who warned us when we had better enter the town. This first journey, and several subsequent ones, turned out well. I found the smuggler's life pleasanter than a soldier's: I could give presents to

Carmen, I had money, and I had a mistress. I felt little or no remorse, for, as the gipsies say, 'The happy man never longs to scratch his itch.'* We were made welcome everywhere, my comrades treated me well, and even showed me a certain respect. The reason of this was that I had killed my man, and that some of them had no exploit of that description on their conscience. But what I valued most in my new life was that I often saw Carmen. She showed me more affection than ever; nevertheless, she would never admit, before my comrades, that she was my mistress, and she had even made me swear all sorts of oaths that I would not say anything about her to them. I was so weak in that creature's hands, that I obeyed all her whims. And besides, this was the first time she had revealed herself as possessing any of the reserve of a well-conducted woman, and I was simple enough to believe she had really cast off her former habits.

"Our gang, which consisted of eight or ten men, was hardly ever together except at decisive moments, and we were usually scattered by twos and threes about the towns and villages. Each one of us pretended to have some trade. One was a tinker, another was a groom; I was supposed

* *Sarapia sat pesquital ne punzava.*

to peddle haberdashery, but I hardly ever showed myself in large places, on account of my unlucky business at Seville. One day, or rather one night, we were to meet below Veger. *El Dancaïre* and I got there before the others.

"'We shall soon have a new comrade,' said he. 'Carmen has just managed one of her best tricks. She has contrived the escape of her *rom,* who was in the *presidio* at Tarifa.'

"I was already beginning to understand the gipsy language, which nearly all my comrades spoke, and this word *rom* startled me.

"'What! her husband? Is she married, then?' said I to the captain.

"'Yes!' he replied, 'married to Garcia *el Tuerto* *—as cunning a gipsy as she is herself. The poor fellow has been at the galleys. Carmen has wheedled the surgeon of the *presidio* to such good purpose that she has managed to get her *rom* out of prison. Faith! that girl's worth her weight in gold. For two years she has been trying to contrive his escape, but she could do nothing until the authorities took it into their heads to change the surgeon. She soon managed to come to an understanding with this new one.'

"You may imagine how pleasant this news was for me. I soon saw Garcia *el Tuerto.* He

* One-eyed man.

was the very ugliest brute that was ever nursed in gipsydom. His skin was black, his soul was blacker, and he was altogether the most thorough-paced ruffian I ever came across in my life. Carmen arrived with him, and when she called him her *rom* in my presence, you should have seen the eyes that she made at me, and the faces she pulled whenever Garcia turned his head away.

"I was disgusted, and never spoke a word to her all night. The next morning we had made up our packs, and had already started, when we became aware that we had a dozen horsemen on our heels. The braggart Andalusians, who had been boasting they would murder every one who came near them, cut a pitiful figure at once. There was a general rout. *El Dancaïre,* Garcia, a good-looking fellow from Ecija, who was called *El Remendado,* and Carmen herself, kept their wits about them. The rest forsook the mules and took to the gorges, where the horses could not follow them. There was no hope of saving the mules, so we hastily unstrapped the best part of our booty, and, taking it on our shoulders, we tried to escape through the rocks down the steepest of the slopes. We threw our packs down in front of us and followed them as best we could, slipping along on our heels.

Meanwhile the enemy fired at us. It was the first time I had ever heard bullets whistling around me, and I didn't mind it very much. When there's a woman looking on, there's no particular merit in snapping one's fingers at death. We all escaped except the poor *Remendado,* who received a bullet wound in the loins. I threw away my pack and tried to lift him up.

"'Idiot!' shouted Garcia, 'what do we want with offal! Finish him off, and don't lose the cotton stockings!'

"'Drop him!' cried Carmen.

"I was so exhausted that I was obliged to lay him down for a moment under a rock. Garcia came up, and fired his blunderbuss full into his face. 'He'd be a clever fellow who recognised him now!' said he, as he looked at the face, cut to pieces by a dozen slugs.

"There, sir; that's the delightful sort of life I've led! That night we found ourselves in a thicket, worn out with fatigue, with nothing to eat, and ruined by the loss of our mules. What do you think that devil Garcia did? He pulled a pack of cards out of his pocket and began playing games with *El Dancaïre* by the light of a fire they kindled. Meanwhile I was lying down, staring at the stars, thinking of *El Remendado,* and telling myself I would just as lief be in his

place. Carmen was squatting down near me, and every now and then she would rattle her castanets and hum a tune. Then, drawing close to me, as if she would have whispered in my ear, she kissed me two or three times over almost against my will.

"'You are a devil,' said I to her.

"'Yes,' she replied.

"After a few hours' rest, she departed to Gaucin, and the next morning a little goatherd brought us some food. We stayed there all that day, and in the evening we moved close to Gaucin. We were expecting news from Carmen, but none came. After daylight broke we saw a muleteer attending a well-dressed woman with a parasol, and a little girl who seemed to be her servant. Said Garcia, 'There go two mules and two women whom St. Nicholas has sent us. I would rather have four mules, but no matter. I'll do the best I can with these.'

"He took his blunderbuss, and went down the pathway, hiding himself among the brushwood.

"We followed him, *El Dancaïre* and I keeping a little way behind. As soon as we were within hail, we showed ourselves, and shouted to the muleteer to stop. When the woman saw us, instead of being frightened—and our dress

would have been enough to frighten any one—she burst into a fit of loud laughter. 'Ah! the *lillipendi!* they take me for an *erani!*' *

"It was Carmen, but so well disguised that if she had spoken any other language I should never have recognised her. She sprang off her mule, and talked some time in an undertone with *El Dancaïre* and Garcia. Then she said to me:

"'Canary-bird, we shall meet again before you're hanged. I'm off to Gibraltar on gipsy business—you'll soon have news of me.'

"We parted, after she had told us of a place where we should find shelter for some days. That girl was the providence of our gang. We soon received some money sent by her, and a piece of news which was still more useful to us—to the effect that on a certain day two English lords would travel from Gibraltar to Granada by a road she mentioned. This was a word to the wise. They had plenty of good guineas. Garcia would have killed them, but *El Dancaïre* and I objected. All we took from them, besides their shirts, which we greatly needed, was their money and their watches.

"Sir, a man may turn rogue in sheer thoughtlessness. You lose your head over a pretty girl, you fight another man about her,

* "The idiots, they take me for a smart lady!"

there is a catastrophe, you have to take to the mountains, and you turn from a smuggler into a robber before you have time to think about it. After this matter of the English lords, we concluded that the neighbourhood of Gibraltar would not be healthy for us, and we plunged into the *Sierra de Ronda*. You once mentioned José-María to me. Well, it was there I made acquaintance with him. He always took his mistress with him on his expeditions. She was a pretty girl, quiet, modest, well-mannered, you never heard a vulgar word from her, and she was quite devoted to him. He, on his side, led her a very unhappy life. He was always running after other women, he ill-treated her, and then sometimes he would take it into his head to be jealous. One day he slashed her with a knife. Well, she only doted on him the more! That's the way with women, and especially with Andalusians. This girl was proud of the scar on her arm, and would display it as though it were the most beautiful thing in the world. And then José-María was the worst of comrades in the bargain. In one expedition we made with him, he managed so that he kept all the profits, and we had all the trouble and the blows. But I must go back to my story. We had no sign at all from Carmen. *El Dancaïre* said: 'One of us will have to go to

Gibraltar to get news of her. She must have planned some business. I'd go at once, only I'm too well known at Gibraltar.' *El Tuerto* said:

"'I'm well known there too. I've played so many tricks on the crayfish *—and as I've only one eye, it is not overeasy for me to disguise myself.'

"'Then I suppose I must go,' said I, delighted at the very idea of seeing Carmen again. 'Well, how am I to set about it?'

The others answered:

"'You must either go by sea, or you must get through by San Rocco, whichever you like the best; once you are at Gibraltar, inquire in the port where a chocolate-seller called *La Rollona* lives. When you've found her, she'll tell you everything that's happening.'

"It was settled that we were all to start for the Sierra, that I was to leave my two companions there, and take my way to Gibraltar, in the character of a fruit-seller. At Ronda one of our men procured me a passport; at Gaucin I was provided with a donkey. I loaded it with oranges and melons, and started forth. When I reached Gibraltar I found that many people

* Name applied by the Spanish populace to the British soldiers, on account of the colour of their uniform.

knew *La Rollona,* but that she was either dead or had gone *ad finibus terræ,** and, to my mind, her disappearance explained the failure of our correspondence with Carmen. I stabled my donkey, and began to move about the town, carrying my oranges as though to sell them, but in reality looking to see whether I could not come across any face I knew. The place is full of ragamuffins from every country in the world, and it really is like the Tower of Babel, for you can't go ten paces along a street without hearing as many languages. I did see some gipsies, but I hardly dared confide in them. I was taking stock of them, and they were taking stock of me. We had mutually guessed each other to be rogues, but the important thing for us was to know whether we belonged to the same gang. After having spent two days in fruitless wanderings, and having found out nothing either as to *La Rollona* or as to Carmen, I was thinking I would go back to my comrades as soon as I had made a few purchases, when, toward sunset, as I was walking along a street, I heard a woman's voice from a window say, 'Orange-seller!'

"I looked up, and on a balcony I saw Carmen looking out, beside a scarlet-coated officer with gold epaulettes, curly hair, and all the ap-

* To the galleys, or else to all the devils in hell.

pearance of a rich *milord.* As for her, she was magnificently dressed, a shawl hung on her shoulders, she'd a gold comb in her hair, everything she wore was of silk; and the cunning little wretch, not a bit altered, was laughing till she held her sides.

" The Englishman shouted to me in mangled Spanish to come upstairs, as the lady wanted some oranges, and Carmen said to me in Basque:

" ' Come up, and don't look astonished at anything! '

" Indeed, nothing that she did ought ever to have astonished me. I don't know whether I was most happy or wretched at seeing her again. At the door of the house there was a tall English servant with a powdered head, who ushered me into a splendid drawing-room. Instantly Carmen said to me in Basque, ' You don't know one word of Spanish, and you don't know me.' Then turning to the Englishman, she added:

" ' I told you so. I saw at once he was a Basque. Now you'll hear what a queer language he speaks. Doesn't he look silly? He's like a cat that's been caught in the larder! '

" ' And you,' said I to her in my own language, ' you look like an impudent jade—and I've a good mind to scar your face here and now, before your spark.'

"'My spark!' said she. 'Why, you've guessed that all alone! Are you jealous of this idiot? You're even sillier than you were before our evening in the *Calle del Candilejo!* Don't you see, fool, that at this moment I'm doing gipsy business, and doing it in the most brilliant manner? This house belongs to me—the guineas of that crayfish will belong to me! I lead him by the nose, and I'll lead him to a place that he'll never get out of!'

"'And if I catch you doing gipsy business in this style again, I'll see to it that you never do any again!' said I.

"'Ah! upon my word! Are you my *rom,* pray, that you give me orders? If *El Tuerto* is pleased, what have you to do with it? Oughtn't you to be very happy that you are the only man who can call himself my *minchorrò?'* *

"'What does he say?' inquired the Englishman.

"'He says he's thirsty, and would like a drink,' answered Carmen, and she threw herself back upon a sofa, screaming with laughter at her own translation.

"When that girl began to laugh, sir, it was hopeless for anybody to try and talk sense. Everybody laughed with her. The big English-

* My "lover," or rather my "fancy."

man began to laugh too, like the idiot he was, and ordered the servant to bring me something to drink.

"While I was drinking she said to me:

"'Do you see that ring he has on his finger? If you like I'll give it to you.'

"And I answered:

"'I would give one of my fingers to have your *milord* out on the mountains, and each of us with a *maquila* in his fist.'

"'*Maquila,* what does that mean?' asked the Englishman.

"'*Maquila,*' said Carmen, still laughing, 'means an orange. Isn't it a queer word for an orange? He says he'd like you to eat *maquila.*'

"'Does he?' said the Englishman. 'Very well, bring more *maquila* to-morrow.'

"While we were talking a servant came in and said dinner was ready. Then the Englishman stood up, gave me a piastre, and offered his arm to Carmen, as if she couldn't have walked alone. Carmen, who was still laughing, said to me:

"'My boy, I can't ask you to dinner. But to-morrow, as soon as you hear the drums beat for parade, come here with your oranges. You'll find a better furnished room than the one in the *Calle del Candilejo,* and you'll see whether I am

still your *Carmencita.* Then afterward we'll talk about gipsy business.'

" I gave her no answer—even when I was in the street I could hear the Englishman shouting, ' Bring more *maquila* to-morrow,' and Carmen's peals of laughter.

" I went out, not knowing what I should do; I hardly slept, and next morning I was so enraged with the treacherous creature that I made up my mind to leave Gibraltar without seeing her again. But the moment the drums began to roll, my courage failed me. I took up my net full of oranges, and hurried off to Carmen's house. Her window-shutters had been pulled apart a little, and I saw her great dark eyes watching for me. The powdered servant showed me in at once. Carmen sent him out with a message, and as soon as we were alone she burst into one of her fits of crocodile laughter and threw her arms around my neck. Never had I seen her look so beautiful. She was dressed out like a queen, and scented; she had silken furniture, embroidered curtains—and I togged out like the thief I was!

" ' *Minchorrò,*' said Carmen, ' I've a good mind to smash up everything here, set fire to the house, and take myself off to the mountains.' And then she would fondle me, and then she

would laugh, and she danced about and tore up her fripperies. Never did monkey gambol nor make such faces, nor play such wild tricks, as she did that day. When she had recovered her gravity—

"'Hark!' she said, 'this is gipsy business. I mean him to take me to Ronda, where I have a sister who is a nun' (here she shrieked with laughter again). 'We shall pass by a particular spot which I shall make known to you. Then you must fall upon him and strip him to the skin. Your best plan would be to do for him, but,' she added, with a certain fiendish smile of hers, which no one who saw it ever had any desire to imitate, 'do you know what you had better do? Let *El Tuerto* come up in front of you. You keep a little behind. The crayfish is brave, and skilful too, and he has good pistols. Do you understand?'

"And she broke off with another fit of laughter that made me shiver.

"'No,' said I, 'I hate Garcia, but he's my comrade. Some day, maybe, I'll rid you of him, but we'll settle our account after the fashion of my country. It's only chance that has made me a gipsy, and in certain things I shall always be a thorough Navarrese,* as the proverb says.'

* *Navarro fino.*

" ' You're a fool,' she rejoined, ' a simpleton, a regular *payllo*. You're just like the dwarf who thinks himself tall because he can spit a long way.* You don't love me! Be off with you! '

" Whenever she said to me ' Be off with you,' I couldn't go away. I promised I would start back to my comrades and wait the arrival of the Englishman. She, on her side, promised me she would be ill until she left Gibraltar for Ronda.

" I remained at Gibraltar two days longer. She had the boldness to disguise herself and come and see me at the inn. I departed, I had a plan of my own. I went back to our meeting-place with the information as to the spot and the hour at which the Englishman and Carmen were to pass by. I found *El Dancaïre* and Garcia waiting for me. We spent the night in a wood, beside a fire made of pine-cones that blazed splendidly. I suggested to Garcia that we should play cards, and he agreed. In the second game I told him he was cheating; he began to laugh; I threw the cards in his face. He tried to get at his blunderbuss. I set my foot on it, and said, ' They say you can use a knife as well as the best ruffian in Malaga; will you try it with me? ' *El Dancaïre* tried to part

* *Or esorjle de or narsichisle, sin chisnar lachinguel.* "The promise of a dwarf is that he will spit a long way."—A gipsy proverb.

us. I had given Garcia one or two cuffs, his rage had given him courage, he drew his knife, and I drew mine. We both of us told *El Dancaïre* he must leave us alone, and let us fight it out. He saw there was no means of stopping us, so he stood on one side. Garcia was already bent double, like a cat ready to spring upon a mouse. He held his hat in his left hand to parry with, and his knife in front of him—that's their Andalusian guard. I stood up in the Navarrese fashion, with my left arm raised, my left leg forward, and my knife held straight along my right thigh. I felt I was stronger than any giant. He flew at me like an arrow. I turned round on my left foot, so that he found nothing in front of him. But I thrust him in the throat, and the knife went in so far that my hand was under his chin. I gave the blade such a twist that it broke. That was the end. The blade was carried out of the wound by a gush of blood as thick as my arm, and he fell full length on his face.

"'What have you done?' said *El Dancaïre* to me.

"'Hark ye,' said I, 'we couldn't live on together. I love Carmen and I mean to be the only one. And besides, Garcia was a villain. I remember what he did to that poor *Remendado,*

There are only two of us left now, but we are both good fellows. Come, will you have me for your friend, for life or death?'

"*El Dancaïre* stretched out his hand. He was a man of fifty.

"'Devil take these love stories!' he cried. 'If you'd asked him for Carmen he'd have sold her to you for a piastre! There are only two of us now—how shall we manage for to-morrow?'

"'I'll manage it all alone,' I answered. 'I can snap my fingers at the whole world now.'

"We buried Garcia, and we moved our camp two hundred paces farther on. The next morning Carmen and her Englishman came along with two muleteers and a servant. I said to *El Dancaïre:*

"'I'll look after the Englishman, you frighten the others—they're not armed!'

"The Englishman was a plucky fellow. He'd have killed me if Carmen hadn't jogged his elbow.

"To put it shortly, I won Carmen back that day, and my first words were to tell her she was a widow.

"When she knew how it had all happened—

"'You'll always be a *lillipendi,*' she said. 'Garcia ought to have killed you. Your Navarrese guard is a pack of nonsense, and he has

sent far more skilful men that you into the darkness. It was just that his time had come —and yours will come too.'

"' Ay, and yours too!—if you're not a faithful *romi* to me.'

"' So be it,' said she. ' I've read in the coffee grounds, more than once, that you and I were to end our lives together. Pshaw! what must be, will be!' and she rattled her castanets, as was her way when she wanted to drive away some worrying thought.

" One runs on when one is talking about one's self. I dare say all these details bore you, but I shall soon be at the end of my story. Our new life lasted for some considerable time. *El Dancaïre* and I gathered a few comrades about us, who were more trustworthy than our earlier ones, and we turned our attention to smuggling. Occasionally, indeed, I must confess we stopped travellers on the highways, but never unless we were at the last extremity, and could not avoid doing so; and besides, we never ill-treated the travellers, and confined ourselves to taking their money from them.

" For some months I was very well satisfied with Carmen. She still served us in our smuggling operations, by giving us notice of any opportunity of making a good haul. She re-

mained either at Malaga, at Cordova, or at Granada, but at a word from me she would leave everything, and come to meet me at some *venta* or even in our lonely camp. Only once—it was at Malaga—she caused me some uneasiness. I heard she had fixed her fancy upon a very rich merchant, with whom she probably proposed to play her Gibraltar trick over again. In spite of everything *El Dancaïre* said to stop me, I started off, walked into Malaga in broad daylight, sought for Carmen and carried her off instantly. We had a sharp altercation.

"'Do you know,' said she, 'now that you're my *rom* for good and all, I don't care for you so much as when you were my *minchorrò!* I won't be worried, and above all, I won't be ordered about. I choose to be free to do as I like. Take care you don't drive me too far; if you tire me out, I'll find some good fellow who'll serve you just as you served *El Tuerto.*'

"*El Dancaïre* patched it up between us; but we had said things to each other that rankled in our hearts, and we were not as we had been before. Shortly after that we had a misfortune: the soldiers caught us, *El Dancaïre* and two of my comrades were killed; two others were taken. I was sorely wounded, and, but for my good horse, I should have fallen into the soldiers'

hands. Half dead with fatigue, and with a bullet in my body, I sought shelter in a wood, with my only remaining comrade. When I got off my horse I fainted away, and I thought I was going to die there in the brushwood, like a shot hare. My comrade carried me to a cave he knew of, and then he sent to fetch Carmen.

" She was at Granada, and she hurried to me at once. For a whole fortnight she never left me for a single instant. She never closed her eyes; she nursed me with a skill and care such as no woman ever showed to the man she loved most tenderly. As soon as I could stand on my feet, she conveyed me with the utmost secrecy to Granada. These gipsy women find safe shelter everywhere, and I spent more than six weeks in a house only two doors from that of the *Corregidor* who was trying to arrest me. More than once I saw him pass by, from behind the shutter. At last I recovered, but I had thought a great deal, on my bed of pain, and I had planned to change my way of life. I suggested to Carmen that we should leave Spain, and seek an honest livelihood in the New World. She laughed in my face.

" ' We were not born to plant cabbages,' she cried. ' Our fate is to live *payllos!* Listen: I've arranged a business with Nathan Ben-Joseph at

Gibraltar. He has cotton stuffs that he can not get through till you come to fetch them. He knows you're alive, and reckons upon you, What would our Gibraltar correspondents say if you failed them?'

"I let myself be persuaded, and took up my vile trade once more.

"While I was hiding at Granada there were bull-fights there, to which Carmen went. When she came back she talked a great deal about a skilful *picador* of the name of Lucas. She knew the name of his horse, and how much his embroidered jacket had cost him. I paid no attention to this; but a few days later, Juanito, the only one of my comrades who was left, told me he had seen Carmen with Lucas in a shop in the Zacatin. Then I began to feel alarmed. I asked Carmen how and why she had made the *picador's* acquaintance.

"'He's a man out of whom we may be able to get something,' said she. 'A noisy stream has either water in it or pebbles.* He has earned twelve hundred reals at the bull-fights. It must be one of two things: we must either have his money, or else, as he is a good rider and a plucky fellow, we can enrol him in our gang. We have

* *Len sos sonsi abela*
Pani o rebleudani terela.—Gipsy proverb.

lost such an one and such an one; you'll have to replace them. Take this man with you!'

"'I want neither his money nor himself,' I replied, 'and I forbid you to speak to him.'

"'Beware!' she retorted. 'If any one defies me to do a thing, it's very quickly done.'

"Luckily the *picador* departed to Malaga, and I set about passing in the Jew's cotton stuffs. This expedition gave me a great deal to do, and Carmen as well. I forgot Lucas, and perhaps she forgot him too—for the moment, at all events. It was just about that time, sir, that I met you, first at Montilla, and then afterward at Cordova. I won't talk about that last interview. You know more about it, perhaps, than I do. Carmen stole your watch from you, she wanted to have your money besides, and especially that ring I see on your finger, and which she declared to be a magic ring, the possession of which was very important to her. We had a violent quarrel, and I struck her. She turned pale and began to cry. It was the first time I had ever seen her cry, and it affected me in the most painful manner. I begged her to forgive me, but she sulked with me for a whole day, and when I started back to Montilla she wouldn't kiss me. My heart was still very sore, when, three days later, she joined me with a smiling

face and as merry as a lark. Everything was forgotten, and we were like a pair of honeymoon lovers. Just as we were parting she said, 'There's a *fête* at Cordova; I shall go and see it, and then I shall know what people will be coming away with money, and I can warn you.'

"I let her go. When I was alone I thought about the *fête*, and about the change in Carmen's temper. 'She must have avenged herself already,' said I to myself, 'since she was the first to make our quarrel up.' A peasant told me there was to be bull-fighting at Cordova. Then my blood began to boil, and I went off like a madman straight to the bull-ring. I had Lucas pointed out to me, and on the bench, just beside the barrier, I recognised Carmen. One glance at her was enough to turn my suspicion into certainty. When the first bull appeared Lucas began, as I had expected, to play the agreeable; he snatched the cockade off the bull and presented it to Carmen, who put it in her hair at once.*

"The bull avenged me. Lucas was knocked down, with his horse on his chest, and the bull on

* *La divisa.* A knot of ribbon, the colour of which indicates the pasturage from which each bull comes. This knot of ribbon is fastened into the bull's hide with a sort of hook, and it is considered the very height of gallantry to snatch it off the living beast and present it to a woman.

top of both of them. I looked for Carmen, she had disappeared from her place already. I couldn't get out of mine, and I was obliged to wait until the bull-fight was over. Then I went off to that house you already know, and waited there quietly all that evening and part of the night. Toward two o'clock in the morning Carmen came back, and was rather surprised to see me.

"'Come with me,' said I.

"'Very well,' said she, 'let's be off.'

"I went and got my horse, and took her up behind me, and we travelled all the rest of the night without saying a word to each other. When daylight came we stopped at a lonely inn, not far from a little hermitage. There I said to Carmen:

"'Listen—I forget everything, I won't mention anything to you. But swear one thing to me—that you'll come with me to America, and live there quietly!'

"'No,' said she, in a sulky voice, 'I won't go to America—I am very well here.'

"'That's because you're near Lucas. But be very sure that even if he gets well now, he won't make old bones. And, indeed, why should I quarrel with him? I'm tired of killing all your lovers; I'll kill you this time.'

"She looked at me steadily with her wild eyes, and then she said:

"'I've always thought you would kill me. The very first time I saw you I had just met a priest at the door of my house. And to-night, as we were going out of Cordova, didn't you see anything? A hare ran across the road between your horse's feet. It is fate.'

"'Carmencita,' I asked, 'don't you love me any more?'

"She gave me no answer, she was sitting cross-legged on a mat, making marks on the ground with her finger.

"'Let us change our life, Carmen,' said I imploringly. 'Let us go away and live somewhere where we shall never be parted. You know we have a hundred and twenty gold ounces buried under an oak not far from here, and then we have more money with Ben-Joseph the Jew.'

"She began to smile, and then she said, 'Me first, and then you. I know it will happen like that.'

"'Think about it,' said I. 'I've come to the end of my patience and my courage. Make up your mind—or else I must make up mine.'

"I left her alone and walked toward the hermitage. I found the hermit praying. I waited till his prayer was finished. I longed to pray

myself, but I couldn't. When he rose up from his knees I went to him.

"'Father,' I said, 'will you pray for some one who is in great danger?'

"'I pray for every one who is afflicted,' he replied.

"'Can you say a mass for a soul which is perhaps about to go into the presence of its Maker?'

"'Yes,' he answered, looking hard at me.

"And as there was something strange about me, he tried to make me talk.

"'It seems to me I have seen you somewhere,' said he.

"I laid a piastre on his bench.

"'When shall you say the mass?' said I.

"'In half an hour. The son of the innkeeper yonder is coming to serve it. Tell me, young man, haven't you something on your conscience that is tormenting you? Will you listen to a Christian's counsel?'

"I could hardly restrain my tears. I told him I would come back, and hurried away. I went and lay down on the grass until I heard the bell. Then I went back to the chapel, but I stayed outside it. When he had said the mass, I went back to the *venta*. I was hoping Carmen would have fled. She could have taken my horse

and ridden away. But I found her there still. She did not choose that any one should say I had frightened her. While I had been away she had unfastened the hem of her gown and taken out the lead that weighted it; and now she was sitting before a table, looking into a bowl of water into which she had just thrown the lead she had melted. She was so busy with her spells that at first she didn't notice my return. Sometimes she would take out a bit of lead and turn it round every way with a melancholy look. Sometimes she would sing one of those magic songs, which invoke the help of Maria Padella, Don Pedro's mistress, who is said to have been the *Bari Crallisa*—the great gipsy queen.*

"'Carmen,' I said to her, 'will you come with me?' She rose, threw away her wooden bowl, and put her mantilla over her head ready to start. My horse was led up, she mounted behind me, and we rode away.

"After we had gone a little distance I said to her, 'So, my Carmen, you are quite ready to follow me, isn't that so?'

*Maria Padella was accused of having bewitched Don Pedro. According to one popular tradition she presented Queen Blanche of Bourbon with a golden girdle which, in the eyes of the bewitched king, took on the appearance of a living snake. Hence the repugnance he always showed toward that unhappy princess.

"She answered, 'Yes, I'll follow you, even to death—but I won't live with you any more.'

"We had reached a lonely gorge. I stopped my horse.

"'Is this the place?' she said.

"And with a spring she reached the ground. She took off her mantilla and threw it at her feet, and stood motionless, with one hand on her hip, looking at me steadily.

"'You mean to kill me, I see that well,' said she. 'It is fate. But you'll never make me give in.'

"I said to her: 'Be rational, I implore you; listen to me. All the past is forgotten. Yet you know it is you who have been my ruin—it is because of you that I am a robber and a murderer. Carmen, my Carmen, let me save you, and save myself with you.'

"'José,' she answered, 'what you ask is impossible. I don't love you any more. You love me still, and that is why you want to kill me. If I liked, I might tell you some other lie, but I don't choose to give myself the trouble. Everything is over between us two. You are my *rom,* and you have the right to kill your *romi,* but Carmen will always be free. A *calli* she was born, and a *calli* she'll die.'

"'Then, you love Lucas?' I asked.

"'Yes, I have loved him—as I loved you—for an instant—less than I loved you, perhaps. But now I don't love anything, and I hate myself for ever having loved you.'

"I cast myself at her feet, I seized her hands, I watered them with my tears, I reminded her of all the happy moments we had spent together, I offered to continue my brigand's life, if that would please her. Everything, sir, everything—I offered her everything if she would only love me again.

"She said:

"'Love you again? That's not possible! Live with you? I will not do it!'

"I was wild with fury. I drew my knife, I would have had her look frightened, and sue for mercy—but that woman was a demon.

"I cried, 'For the last time I ask you, Will you stay with me?'

"'No! no! no!' she said, and she stamped her foot.

"Then she pulled a ring I had given her off her finger, and cast it into the brushwood.

"I struck her twice over—I had taken Garcia's knife, because I had broken my own. At the second thrust she fell without a sound. It seems to me that I can still see her great black

eyes staring at me. Then they grew dim and the lids closed.

"For a good hour I lay there prostrate beside her corpse. Then I recollected that Carmen had often told me that she would like to lie buried in a wood. I dug a grave for her with my knife and laid her in it. I hunted about a long time for her ring, and I found it at last. I put it into the grave beside her, with a little cross—perhaps I did wrong. Then I got upon my horse, galloped to Cordova, and gave myself up at the nearest guard-room. I told them I had killed Carmen, but I would not tell them where her body was. That hermit was a holy man! He prayed for her—he said a mass for her soul. Poor child! it's the *calle* who are to blame for having brought her up as they did."

IV

Spain is one of the countries in which those nomads, scattered all over Europe, and known as Bohemians, Gitanas, Gipsies, Zigeuner, and so forth, are now to be found in the greatest numbers. Most of these people live, or rather wander hither and thither, in the southern and eastern provinces of Spain, in Andalusia, and

Estramadura, in the kingdom of Nurcia. There are a great many of them in Catalonia. These last frequently cross over into France and are to be seen at all our southern fairs. The men generally call themselves grooms, horse doctors, mule-clippers; to these trades they add the mending of saucepans and brass utensils, not to mention smuggling and other illicit practices. The women tell fortunes, beg, and sell all sorts of drugs, some of which are innocent, while some are not. The physical characteristics of the gipsies are more easily distinguished than described, and when you have known one, you should be able to recognise a member of the race among a thousand other men. It is by their physiognomy and expression, especially, that they differ from the other inhabitants of the same country. Their complexion is exceedingly swarthy, always darker than that of the race among whom they live. Hence the name of *calé* (blacks) which they frequently apply to themselves.* Their eyes, set with a decided slant, are large, very black, and shaded by long and heavy lashes. Their glance can only be compared to that of a wild creature. It is full at once of boldness and shyness, and in

* It has struck me that the German gipsies, though they thoroughly understand the word *calé*, do not care to be called by that name. Among themselves they always use the designation *Romané tchavé*.

this respect their eyes are a fair indication of their national character, which is cunning, bold, but with "the natural fear of blows," like Panurge. Most of the men are strapping fellows, slight and active. I don't think I ever saw a gipsy who had grown fat. In Germany the gipsy women are often very pretty; but beauty is very uncommon among the Spanish gitanas. When very young, they may pass as being attractive in their ugliness, but once they have reached motherhood, they become absolutely repulsive. The filthiness of both sexes is incredible, and no one who has not seen a gipsy matron's hair can form any conception of what it is like, not even if he conjures up the roughest, the greasiest, and the dustiest heads imaginable. In some of the large Andalusian towns certain of the gipsy girls, somewhat better looking than their fellows, will take more care of their personal appearance. These go out and earn money by performing dances strongly resembling those forbidden at our public balls in carnival time. An English missionary, Mr. Borrow, the author of two very interesting works on the Spanish gipsies, whom he undertook to convert on behalf of the Bible Society, declares there is no instance of any gitana showing the smallest weakness for a man not belonging to her own race. The praise he

bestows upon their chastity strikes me as being exceedingly exaggerated. In the first place, the great majority are in the position of the ugly woman described by Ovid, "*Casta quam nemo rogavit.*" As for the pretty ones, they are, like all Spanish women, very fastidious in choosing their lovers. Their fancy must be taken, and their favour must be earned. Mr. Borrow quotes, in proof of their virtue, one trait which does honour to his own, and especially to his simplicity: he declares that an immoral man of his acquaintance offered several gold ounces to a pretty gitana, and offered them in vain. An Andalusian, to whom I retailed this anecdote, asserted that the immoral man in question would have been far more successful if he had shown the girl two or three piastres, and that to offer gold ounces to a gipsy was as poor a method of persuasion as to promise a couple of millions to a tavern wench. However that may be, it is certain that the gitana shows the most extraordinary devotion to her husband. There is no danger and no suffering she will not brave, to help him in his need. One of the names which the gipsies apply to themselves, *Romé,* or "the married couple," seems to me a proof of their racial respect for the married state. Speaking generally, it may be asserted that their chief virtue is their

patriotism—if we may thus describe the fidelity they observe in all their relations with persons of the same origin as their own, their readiness to help one another, and the inviolable secrecy which they keep for each other's benefit, in all compromising matters. And, indeed, something of the same sort may be noticed in all mysterious associations which are beyond the pale of the law.

Some months ago, I paid a visit to a gipsy tribe in the Vosges country. In the hut of an old woman, the oldest member of the tribe, I found a gipsy, in no way related to the family, who was sick of a mortal disease. The man had left a hospital, where he was well cared for, so that he might die among his own people. For thirteen weeks he had been lying in bed in their encampment, and receiving far better treatment than any of the sons and sons-in-law who shared his shelter. He had a good bed made of straw and moss, and sheets that were tolerably white, whereas all the rest of the family, which numbered eleven persons, slept on planks three feet long. So much for their hospitality. This very same woman, humane as was her treatment of her guest, said to me constantly before the sick man: "*Singo, singo, homte hi mulo.*" "Soon, soon he must die!" After all, these people live

such miserable lives, that a reference to the approach of death can have no terrors for them.

One remarkable feature in the gipsy character is their indifference about religion. Not that they are strong-minded, or sceptical. They have never made any profession of atheism. Far from that, indeed, the religion of the country which they inhabit is always theirs; but they change their religion when they change the country of their residence. They are equally free from the superstitions which replace religious feeling in the minds of the vulgar. How, indeed, can superstition exist among a race which, as a rule, makes its livelihood out of the credulity of others? Nevertheless, I have remarked a particular horror of touching a corpse among the Spanish gipsies. Very few of these could be induced to carry a dead man to his grave, even if they were paid for it.

I have said that most gipsy women undertake to tell fortunes. They do this very successfully. But they find a much greater source of profit in the sale of charms and love-philters. Not only do they supply toads' claws to hold fickle hearts, and powdered loadstone to kindle love in cold ones, but if necessity arises, they can use mighty incantations, which force the devil to lend them his aid. Last year the following story

was related to me by a Spanish lady. She was walking one day along the Callé d'Alcala, feeling very sad and anxious. A gipsy woman who was squatting on the pavement called out to her, "My pretty lady, your lover has played you false!" (It was quite true.) "Shall I get him back for you?" My readers will imagine with what joy the proposal was accepted, and how complete was the confidence inspired by a person who could thus guess the inmost secrets of the heart. As it would have been impossible to proceed to perform the operations of magic in the most crowded street in Madrid, a meeting was arranged for the next day. "Nothing will be easier than to bring back the faithless one to your feet!" said the gitana. "Do you happen to have a handkerchief, a scarf, or a mantilla, that he gave you?" A silken scarf was handed her. "Now sew a piastre into one corner of the scarf with crimson silk—sew half a piastre into another corner—sew a peseta here—and a two-real piece there; then, in the middle you must sew a gold coin—a doubloon would be best." The doubloon and all the other coins were duly sewn in. "Now give me the scarf, and I'll take it to the Campo Santo when midnight strikes. You come along with me, if you want to see a fine piece of witchcraft. I promise you shall see the

man you love to-morrow!" The gipsy departed alone for the Campo Santo, since my Spanish friend was too much afraid of witchcraft to go there with her. I leave my readers to guess whether my poor forsaken lady ever saw her lover, or her scarf, again.

In spite of their poverty and the sort of aversion they inspire, the gipsies are treated with a certain amount of consideration by the more ignorant folk, and they are very proud of it. They feel themselves to be a superior race as regards intelligence, and they heartily despise the people whose hospitality they enjoy. "These Gentiles are so stupid," said one of the Vosges gipsies to me, "that there is no credit in taking them in. The other day a peasant woman called out to me in the street. I went into her house. Her stove smoked and she asked me to give her a charm to cure it. First of all I made her give me a good bit of bacon, and then I began to mumble a few words in *Romany*. 'You're a fool,' I said, 'you were born a fool, and you'll die a fool!' When I had got near the door I said to her, in good German, 'The most certain way of keeping your stove from smoking is not to light any fire in it!' and then I took to my heels."

The history of the gipsies is still a problem. We know, indeed, that their first bands, which

were few and far between, appeared in Eastern Europe toward the beginning of the fifteenth century. But nobody can tell whence they started, or why they came to Europe, and, what is still more extraordinary, no one knows how they multiplied, within a short time, and in so prodigious a fashion, and in several countries, all very remote from each other. The gipsies themselves have preserved no tradition whatsoever as to their origin, and though most of them do speak of Egypt as their original fatherland, that is only because they have adopted a very ancient fable respecting their race.

Most of the Orientalists who have studied the gipsy language believe that the cradle of the race was in India. It appears, in fact, that many of the roots and grammatical forms of the *Romany* tongue are to be found in idioms derived from the Sanskrit. As may be imagined, the gipsies, during their long wanderings, have adopted many foreign words. In every *Romany* dialect a number of Greek words appear, as, for instance *cocal* (bone), from κόκκαλον; *petaíe* (horse-shoe), from πέταλον; *cafi* (nail), from καρφί, etc.

At the present day the gipsies have almost as many dialects as there are separate hordes of their race. Everywhere, they speak the lan-

guage of the country they inhabit more easily than their own idiom, which they seldom use, except with the object of conversing freely before strangers. A comparison of the dialect of the German gipsies with that used by the Spanish gipsies, who have held no communication with each other for several centuries, reveals the existence of a great number of words common to both. But everywhere the original language is notably affected, though in different degrees, by its contact with the more cultivated languages into the use of which the nomads have been forced. German in one case and Spanish in the other have so modified the *Romany* groundwork that it would not be possible for a gipsy from the Black Forest to converse with one of his Andalusian brothers, although a few sentences on each side would suffice to convince them that each was speaking a dialect of the same language. Certain words in very frequent use are, I believe, common to every dialect. Thus, in every vocabulary which I have been able to consult, *pani* means water, *manro* means bread, *mâs* stands for meat, and *lon* for salt.

The nouns of number are almost the same in every case. The German dialect seems to me much purer than the Spanish, for it has preserved numbers of the primitive grammatical

forms, whereas the gitanas have adopted those of the Castilian tongue. Nevertheless, some words are an exception, as though to prove that the language was originally common to all. The preterite of the German dialect is formed by adding *ium* to the imperative, which is always the root of the verb. In the Spanish *Romany* the verbs are all conjugated on the model of the first conjugation of the Castilian verbs. From *jamar,* the infinitive of "to eat," the regular conjugation should be *jamé,* "I have eaten." From *lillar,* "to take," *lillé,* "I have taken." Yet, some old gipsies say, as an exception, *jayon* and *lillon.* I am not acquainted with any other verbs which have preserved this ancient form.

While I am thus showing off my small acquaintance with the *Romany* language, I must notice a few words of French slang which our thieves have borrowed from the gipsies. From *Les Mystères de Paris* honest folk have learned that the word *chourin* means "a knife." This is pure *Romany—tchouri* is one of the words which is common to every dialect. Monsieur Vidocq calls a horse *grès*—this again is a gipsy word—*gras, gre, graste,* and *gris.* Add to this the word *romanichel,* by which the gipsies are described in Parisian slang. This is a corruption of *ro-*

mané tchavé—"gipsy lads." But a piece of etymology of which I am really proud is that of the word *frimousse,* "face," "countenance," —a word which every schoolboy uses, or did use, in my time. Note, in the first place, that Oudin, in his curious dictionary, published in 1640, wrote the word *firlimouse.* Now in *Romany, firla,* or *fila,* stands for "face," and has the same meaning—it is exactly the *os* of the Latins. The combination of *firlamui* was instantly understood by a genuine gipsy, and I believe it to be true to the spirit of the gipsy language.

I have surely said enough to give the readers of Carmen a favourable idea of my *Romany* studies. I will conclude with the following proverb, which comes in very appropriately: *En retudi panda nasti abela macha.* "Between closed lips no fly can pass."

ARSÈNE GUILLOT

ARSÈNE GUILLOT

Σε Πάρις καὶ Φοιβος Απόλλων
Ἔσθλὸν εοντ', ολεσωσιν ενὶ Σκαιῇσι πόλησιν.*
HOMER, II, xxii, 360.

I

THE last mass had been said at Saint Roch, and the beadle was making his rounds to close the deserted chapels. He was about to draw the grille to one of those aristocratic sanctuaries where certain devotees purchase permission to worship God, apart from the rest of the faithful, when he observed that a woman was there still, apparently absorbed in meditation and prayer. "It is Madame de Piennes," he said to himself, pausing at the door of the chapel. Madame de Piennes was well known to the beadle. At that epoch, a woman of the world, young, rich and pretty, who gave the consecrated bread, donated the altar cloths, and made large contributions to charity through the agency of her curate, de-

* Paris and Phoebus Apollo shall destroy thee, even although thou art worthy, beside the Skœan gate.—*Homer, ii, xxii, 360.*

served some credit for being devout, when she had not a husband in the employ of the government, and had nothing to gain by frequenting the churches, aside from her salvation. Such was Madame de Piennes.

The beadle wished to go to his dinner, for people of his class dine at one o'clock, but he dared not disturb the devotions of a person so distinguished in the parish of Saint-Roch. He walked away therefore, making his worn shoes resound upon the flags, hoping to find the chapel empty upon his return after finishing the rounds of the church.

He had gained the other side of the choir when a young woman entered the church and began walking up and down a side aisle, looking curiously at her surroundings. Reredos, stations, holy-water fonts appeared as strange to her, as would appear to you, madam, the sacred niche or the inscriptions of a mosque in Cairo. She was about twenty-five years old, though to a casual observer she would have appeared much older. Although very brilliant, her black eyes were sunken, and encircled by dark rings; her sallow complexion and discoloured lips were indicative of suffering, and yet a certain air of audacity and gaiety in her bearing contrasted strangely with her sickly appearance. In her dress you would have remarked a

grotesque mingling of carelessness and studied elegance. Her rose-coloured bonnet, adorned with artificial flowers, would have been more in keeping with an evening toilet. Beneath a long cashmere shawl, of which the experienced eye of a woman would have discerned she was not the original owner, was hidden a cheap cotton frock, a little the worse for wear. Finally, only a man would have admired her feet, incased as they were in worn stockings, and felt shoes which bore the marks of long contact with the pavements—you will recall, madam, that asphalt had not yet been invented.

That woman, whose social position you have already divined, approached the chapel still occupied by Madame de Piennes, and regarding her a moment with a troubled and embarrassed air, she accosted her when she saw that she had arisen and was about to depart.

" Can you tell me, madam," she demanded in a low voice, and with a smile of timidity, " can you tell me to whom I should address myself in order to offer a wax taper? "

The language was so strange to the ears of Madame de Piennes that she did not understand at first. She repeated the question to herself.

" Yes, I wish very much to offer a wax taper to Saint Roch; but I know not to whom I should give the money."

Madame de Piennes was too enlightened to believe in the popular superstitions. Nevertheless she respected them; for there is something touching in all forms of worship, however crude they may be. Persuaded that it was a question pertaining to a vow, or something of that nature, and too charitable to draw from the costume of the young woman in rose-coloured bonnet, conclusions which you perhaps have not scrupled to form, she referred her to the beadle who was coming toward them. The stranger thanked her, and hastening to meet that man, she repeated to him her wish, which he seemed to understand at half a word. While Madame de Piennes was gathering up her prayer-book and adjusting her veil, she saw the lady of the taper draw a small purse from her pocket, select a single five-franc piece from many smaller coins, and give it to the beadle, whispering meanwhile, minute instructions to which he gave smiling attention.

The two women left the church at the same time, but she of the taper walked very fast, and Madame de Piennes soon lost sight of her, although her path lay in the same direction. At the corner of the street where she resided she again encountered her. Beneath her cashmere shawl, the stranger endeavoured to hide a loaf

of bread which she had just purchased at a neighbouring bakery. When she saw Madame de Piennes she dropped her head, smiled involuntarily, and hastened her footsteps. Her smile seemed to say: "How can I help it? I am poor. Laugh at me if you choose. I am aware that one does not buy bread in a rose-coloured bonnet and cashmere shawl." This mingling of bashfulness, resignation, and good humour did not escape the notice of Madame de Piennes. She thought of the probable position of that young girl with sadness. "Her piety," she said to herself, "is more meritorious than mine. Assuredly her offering of a five-franc piece is a much greater sacrifice than the superfluity which I donate to charity, without imposing the least privation upon myself." Then she remembered the widow's mite, more acceptable to God than the ostentatious alms-giving of the rich. "I do not do enough good," she thought; "I do not do all that I should." While thus addressing to herself mentally the reproaches which she was far from meriting, she reached her own door. The wax taper, the penny loaf, and specially the offering of her only five-franc piece, had impressed upon the memory of Madame de Piennes the face of the young woman whom she regarded as a model of piety.

She frequently saw her afterward in the street leading to the church, but never at the service. Whenever the stranger passed Madame de Piennes she dropped her head and smiled faintly. That humble smile pleased Madame de Piennes. She would have been glad of an occasion to befriend the poor girl, who at first had aroused her interest, and who now excited her pity; for she noticed that the rose-coloured bonnet was fading and that the cashmere shawl had disappeared. Doubtless it had been returned to the pawnbroker.

It was evident that Saint Roch had not repaid a hundredfold the offering which had been made to him.

One day Madame de Piennes saw a coffin borne into the church, followed by a poorly clad man, with not even a band of crape upon his hat; he was evidently a porter. For more than a month she had not met the young woman of the taper, and the idea came to her that she was assisting at her burial. Nothing was more probable, pale and emaciated as she was the last time that Madame de Piennes had seen her. The beadle being questioned, he interrogated in turn the man who followed the coffin. He replied that he was the porter of a house in Louis le Grand Street; that a tenant had died, one

Madame Guillot, who had neither relatives nor friends, with the exception of one daughter, and that out of the pure kindness of his heart he, the porter, was attending the funeral of a person who was nothing to him. Madame de Piennes imagined at once that her stranger had died in her misery, leaving a motherless child without care, and promised herself to send a priest, whom she usually employed in dispensing her charities, to inquire into the case.

Three days later, as she was going for a drive, a cart crosswise of the street arrested her carriage for a few moments. In looking carelessly out of the carriage door she saw, sitting in the cart, the young girl whom she had believed to be dead. She readily recognised her, although she was more pale and emaciated than ever, dressed in mourning, though poorly so, with neither gloves nor hat. She had a strange expression. Instead of her accustomed smile, all of her features were drawn; her great black eyes were haggard; she turned them toward Madame de Piennes, but without recognition, for she saw nothing. Her countenance was expressive of a fierce determination rather than sorrow. The cart turned aside, and the carriage of Madame de Piennes rolled rapidly away; but the picture of the young girl and her

expression of despair haunted her for several hours.

Upon her return she saw a great crowd of people in her street. All the portresses were at their street doors, telling some story, to which their neighbours listened with a lively interest. The mob was especially dense in front of a house near to the one inhabited by Madame de Piennes herself. All eyes were turned toward an open window at the third story, and in each little group one or two arms were raised to point it out to public notice; then suddenly the arms dropped, and all eyes followed the movement. Some extraordinary thing had happened.

Passing through her antechamber, Madame de Piennes found her frightened servants, each one pressing toward her, eager to relate the exciting news of the neighbourhood. But before she could ask a single question her maid cried:

"Oh! madam!—if madam knew!" And opening the doors with incredible swiftness, she followed her mistress into the holy of holies—in other words, her dressing-room, which was inaccessible to the rest of the household.

"Ah! madam," said Mademoiselle Josephine, as she was removing the shawl of Madame

de Piennes, "my blood runs cold. Never have I seen anything so terrible; that is to say, I have not seen it, although I reached the spot immediately after. But, for all that——"

"What has happened? Speak quickly, mademoiselle."

"Well, madam, it is that, three doors from here, a poor unfortunate young girl threw herself from a window, not three minutes ago; if madam had arrived a minute sooner she would have heard the crash."

"Merciful Heaven! And the poor creature killed herself?"

"Madam, it is horrible. Baptiste, who has been to the war, says that he has never seen anything equal to it. From the third story, madam."

"Was she killed instantly?"

"Oh! madam, she was still alive, she even spoke. 'I wish some one would put me out of my misery,' she said. Her bones were in pulp. Madam can imagine what a terrible fall she had."

"But that poor soul—has any one gone to her? Did any one send for a doctor, a priest?"

"For a priest—madam knows better than I, of course. But if I were a priest— A creature so abandoned as to kill herself! Be-

sides, this one was so bad—one could see that readily enough. She belonged to the opera, I was told. All of those creatures come to some bad end. She placed herself before the window, tied her skirts about her with a rose-coloured ribbon, and——"

"It is that poor girl in mourning!" cried Madame de Piennes, speaking to herself.

"Yes, madam, her mother died three or four days ago. Her head may have been turned with grief. With all that, perhaps her lover left her in the lurch—and then the end came—No money; such people don't know how to work— Bad heads! By-and-by misfortune comes——"

Mademoiselle Josephine continued in this strain for some time, unheeded by Madame de Piennes. She seemed to be thinking sadly over the story she had just heard. Suddenly she demanded of Mademoiselle Josephine:

"Does any one know if that poor girl has what she needs in her present condition—linen, pillows? I wish to know immediately."

"I will go and make inquiries for madam, if madam wishes," cried the maid, delighted at the chance of seeing at close range a woman who had wished to kill herself. Then, reflecting:

"But," she added, "I do not know as I

would have the strength to see that—a woman who has fallen from the third story! When they bled Baptiste it made me quite ill. Even that was too much for me."

"Very well, send Baptiste," cried Madame de Piennes; "but let me know at once how that poor child is." Fortunately her own physician, Dr. K——, arrived as she was giving that order. He came to dine with her, as was his custom every Tuesday, the day of Italian opera.

"Hurry, doctor," she cried to him, without giving him time to put down his walking-stick or lay aside his wadded greatcoat; "Baptiste will lead you two steps from here. A poor young girl has thrown herself out of a window, and is without assistance."

"Out of a window?" said the doctor. "If it was high, probably there is nothing for me to do."

The doctor would have preferred to dine rather than perform an operation, but Madame de Piennes insisted, and upon her promise that the dinner should be delayed he consented to follow Baptiste.

The latter returned in a few minutes in quest of linen, pillows, etc. At the same time he brought the opinion of the doctor.

"It is nothing serious. She will recover, if

she doesn't die of—I don't remember what he said she might die of, but it ended in *us*."

"Of tetanus!" exclaimed Madame de Piennes.

"Precisely, madam; but it was very fortunate that the doctor arrived as he did, for there was already a quack doctor there, the same one that treated little Berthelot for the measles, and she was dead at his third visit."

At the end of an hour the doctor reappeared, his hair slightly unpowdered and his beautiful cambric frill in disorder.

"These would-be suicides are born to good luck," he said. "The other day a woman was brought to my hospital who had shot herself in the mouth with a pistol. A bad way of attempting it! She broke three teeth, made a hole in her left cheek. She will be a little plainer-looking for it, and that is all. This one throws herself from a third story. A poor devil of an honest man would fall accidentally from the first and break his neck. This girl breaks a leg. Two ribs were driven in, add a few contusions and all is said. A lean-to was opportunely there, which broke the force of her fall. It is the third case of the kind which I have seen since my return to Paris. She fell upon her feet. The tibia and fibula will unite again.

What is worse is that the sauce for the turbot is completely dried up. I have fears for the roast, and we shall miss the first act of 'Othello.'"

"And that poor girl, did she tell you what drove her to——"

"Oh! I never listen to those stories, madam. I ask them: 'When did you eat last, etc., etc.?' —because that is important for the treatment. Zounds! when one kills himself it is for some bad reason. A lover leaves you, a landlord turns you out of doors; one jumps from the window to be revenged. But one is no sooner in the air than he repents of it."

"She is repentant, I hope, the poor child?"

"Doubtless, doubtless. She wept and made noise enough to deafen me. Baptiste is a famous assistant, madam; he was much better than a medical student who was there, and who scratched his head, not knowing where to begin. The saddest thing in her case is that she escapes death by suicide only to die of consumption; for that she is a consumptive I would take my oath. I did not auscultate, but the *facies* never deceives me. To be in such haste, when one has only to wait so short a time!"

"You will see her to-morrow, doctor, will you not?"

"Certainly, if you wish me to. I assured

her that you would do something for her. The best thing would be to send her to a hospital. There she would be furnished, gratis, an appliance for the reduction of her leg. But at the word 'hospital' she cried that that would finish her, and all the old gossips joined in chorus. However, when one hasn't a penny——"

"I will bear the small expense necessary, doctor. I confess that that word terrifies me also, in spite of myself, like the gossips of whom you speak. Moreover, to remove her to a hospital, now that she is in such a horrible condition, would be the death of her."

"Prejudice! pure prejudice on the part of the public. One is nowhere as well off as in a hospital, and when my time comes to be ferried over the Styx, it is from there that I wish to embark in Charon's boat; I shall bequeath my body to the students—thirty or forty years hence, of course. Seriously, my dear, consider well: I am not sure that your protégée is worthy of your interest. She appears to me like some ballet girl—it requires the legs of a ballet dancer to make a leap like that so happily——"

"But I have seen her at the church—and, well, doctor, you know my weakness; I construct a complete story upon a face, a glance. Laugh as much as you please, I am rarely de-

ceived. That poor girl has made recently a votive offering for her mother, who was ill. Her mother died. Then she lost her reason. Despair and misery drove her to that terrible deed."

"Very well! Yes, in fact, she has upon the top of her head a protuberance which indicates exaggeration. All that you say is quite probable. You remind me that there was a palm-branch above her cot-bed. That is proof of her piety, is it not?"

"A cot-bed! Ah! how pitiful! Poor girl! But, doctor, you have that wicked little smile that I know so well. I am not speaking of the devoutness which she has or has not. That which especially impels me to interest myself in that girl is that I have to reproach myself on her account——"

"To reproach yourself? I have it. Doubtless you should have ordered cushions placed in the street to receive her?"

"Yes, to reproach myself. I noticed her destitution, I ought to have sent her assistance; but poor Father Dubignon was ill, and——"

"You must indeed suffer from remorse, madam, if you think it is not doing enough to give, as is your custom, to all who beg openly; it is incumbent upon you also to seek out those

who are too proud to beg. But, madam, let us talk no more of broken legs—or rather, three words more. If you are going to take my new patient under your protection, order for her a better bed, a nurse to-morrow—the gossips will do well enough for to-day—broths, cough mixtures, etc. And it would not be a bad idea to send to her some kind-hearted priest, who will comfort her and mend her morals, as I have mended her leg. That young woman is nervous; we may have to meet sudden complications. You would be—yes, now that I think of it, you would be the very best comforter; but you have to adapt your sermons better. I am done. It is half after eight; for the love of God, go and get ready for the opera. Baptiste will bring me some coffee and the daily paper. I have been too busy to-day to learn what is going on in the world."

Several days passed, and the invalid was a little better. The doctor only complained that the moral excitement did not diminish.

"I have no great faith in any of your abbés," he said to Madame de Piennes. "If the sight of human suffering were not too repulsive to you, and I know that you have the courage, you could soothe the mind of that poor child better than any preacher of Saint Roch."

Madame de Piennes asked nothing better, and proposed to go with him at once. They climbed the stairs to the chamber of the sick girl.

In a chamber furnished with three rush-bottomed chairs and a small table she was stretched upon a comfortable bed, the gift of Madame de Piennes. The fine linen sheets, thick mattress, and a pile of large pillows indicated a thoughtful attention, the author of which you will readily guess. The young girl, horribly pale, with burning eyes, had one arm outside of the coverlet, and that portion of the arm below the sleeve was livid and bruised, indicating the condition of the rest of her body. When she saw Madame de Piennes she raised her head, and with a smile, sweet and sad:

"I knew very well that it was you who have had pity upon me, madam," she said. "They told me your name, and I was sure that it was the lady whom I had seen at Saint Roch."

It seems to me that I have already said to you that Madame de Piennes made some pretensions of divining people by their appearance. She was delighted to discover a similar talent in her protégée, and that discovery interested her still further in her favour.

"This room is not very cheerful, my poor

child!" she said, casting a glance over the sombre furnishings of the chamber. "Why have they not sent you some curtains? You must ask Baptiste for any little articles which you need."

"You are very kind, madam. But what more do I need? Nothing. This is the end. A little better or a little worse, what does it matter?"

And, turning her head, she began to weep.

"Do you suffer much, my poor child?" inquired Madame de Piennes, seating herself beside the bed.

"No, not much, only I have always in my ears the rushing sound as of wind when I fell, and then the noise—crack! when I struck the pavement."

"You were mad then, my dear; you are sorry for it now, are you not?"

"Yes; but when people are unhappy, they are no longer in their right mind."

"I deeply regret that I did not know your position sooner. But, my child, under no circumstances ought we to abandon ourselves to despair."

"That is easy enough for you to say," said the doctor, who was writing a prescription at the little table. "You do not know what it

means to lose a fine, mustachioed young man. But, zounds! it is not necessary to jump out of the window in order to run after him."

"For shame, doctor!" said Madame de Piennes; "the poor girl doubtless had other motives for——"

"Ah! I don't know what I had," cried the sick girl; "a hundred reasons in one. In the first place, when mamma died it was a terrible blow. Then I felt myself abandoned—nobody left to care for me! Finally, somebody who was more to me than all the world— Madam, to forget even my name! yes, my name is Arsène Guillot—G, U, I, two L's; he spelled it with a Y."

"Just as I said, a faithless lover!" cried the doctor. "That is always the case. Tut, tut, my beauty, forget him. A man without a memory is unworthy of a thought." He looked at his watch. "Four o'clock?" he said, arising; "I am late for my consultation. Madam, I beg ten thousand pardons, but I must leave you; I haven't even the time to escort you home. Good-bye, my child. Calm yourself, that will amount to nothing. You will be able to dance just as well on that foot as the other. And you, nurse, have this prescription filled, and continue the same treatment as yesterday."

The doctor and the nurse had gone out. Madame de Piennes remained alone with the sick girl, a little alarmed at finding a love affair in a history which she had arranged quite otherwise in her imagination.

"So somebody deceived you, unhappy child!" she resumed after a brief silence.

"Me! no. How deceive a miserable girl like me? Simply he no longer cared for me. He was right; I am not what he needs. He has always been good and generous. I had written to him to tell him where I was, and if he wished me to come to him. Then he wrote me—things which gave me much pain. The other day, when I returned home, I let fall a mirror which he had given me, a Venetian mirror he said. The mirror was broken. I said to myself: 'This is the last stroke!' It is a sign that all is at an end between us—I had nothing left of his. I had placed all the jewels in pawn— And then I said to myself, that if I were to take my life, that would be a grief to him, and I should be revenged. The window was open, and I threw myself out."

"But, miserable girl, the motive was as frivolous as the act was criminal."

"Well and good! But how can it be helped? When one is sorrowful, one does not reflect. It

is very easy for happy people to say: 'Be reasonable.'"

"Yes, I know. Misfortune is a bad counsellor. But even in the midst of the greatest trials there are things that one should not forget. I saw you perform an act of piety at Saint Roch but recently. You have the support which comes from Christian faith. Religion, my dear, should prevent you from abandoning yourself to despair. The good God has given you your life; it does not belong to you. But I am doing wrong to scold you now, my dear. You repent, you suffer, God will have mercy upon you."

Arsène bowed her head and her eyes were bathed in tears.

"Alas! madam," she said, sighing deeply, "you believe me to be better than I am. You believe me to be pious, but I am not very. I have never been taught, and if you saw me at the church, offering a wax-taper, it was because I didn't know which way to turn."

"Well, my dear, it was a happy thought. When trouble comes, always go to God for comfort."

"Somebody told me—that if I were to offer a wax-taper to Saint Roch—but no, madam, I ought not to tell you that. A lady like you does

not know what people do when they have spent their last penny."

"It is courage above all things that one should ask of God."

"After all, madam, I do not wish you to think me better than I am, and it is robbing you to profit by the charities which you do without knowing me. I am an unfortunate girl—but in this world one lives as he can. To have done, madam, I offered the taper because my mother said that when one offers a taper to Saint Roch one never fails to find a lover within the week. But I have lost my good looks, I look like a mummy. Nobody cares for me any more. Ah, well, there is nothing left but to die. Already it is half accomplished."

All that was said very rapidly, in a voice broken by sobs, and with an accent so frenzied that Madame de Piennes was more inspired with fright than with horror. Involuntarily she drew away from the bedside of the invalid. Perhaps she would have left the chamber if her humanity had not been stronger than her disgust for that lost creature, and prevented her from leaving her alone at a moment when she was a prey to the most violent despair. There was a moment of silence; then Madame de Piennes, with drooping eyelids, murmured faintly:

"Your mother! Unhappy girl! What dare you to say?"

"Oh, my mother was like all mothers, all mothers of our class. She provided for her mother, I supported her in turn. Fortunately, I have no child. I see, madam, that I frighten you, but how could it be helped? You have been delicately reared. You have never endured suffering. When one is rich it is easy to be virtuous. I, too, would have been virtuous if I had had the means. I have had many lovers. I never loved but one man. He has brought me to this. If I had been rich we would have married. We would have reared a virtuous family. Think of it, madam. I talk to you like that, so frankly, although I can see what you think of me, and you are right. But you are the only virtuous woman to whom I have ever spoken in my life, and you appear to be so kind, so good!—that I said to myself: 'Even when she knows me she will pity me.' I am going to die. I request but one thing of you. That is, when I am dead, to have one mass said for me, in the church where I saw you for the first time. Only one prayer, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart——"

"No, you will not die!" cried Madame de Piennes, greatly moved. "God will have mercy

upon you, poor sinner. You will repent of your misdemeanours, and He will pardon you. If my prayers can do aught for your salvation they will not be wanting. They who have reared you are more guilty than you. Only have courage and hope. Try to be more calm, my poor child. It is necessary to heal the body; the soul is sick also, but I charge myself with its healing.'"

She arose as she said that, and folding a little roll of gold pieces:

"Take this," she said; "if you have a wish for anything——"

And she slipped her little present under the pillow.

"No, madam," cried Arsène, impetuously thrusting the paper aside, "I wish nothing of you but what you have promised. Farewell, we shall never meet again. Have me taken to a hospital, that I may die without troubling any one. You would never be able to make anything of me. A great lady like you will have prayed for me; I am content. Farewell."

And turning herself as well as she was able, she hid her head in the pillow in order to see nothing more.

"Listen, Arsène," said Madame de Piennes in a serious tone. "I have plans concerning you.

I wish to make of you a good woman. I am sure that you are repentant. I am coming to see you often. I am going to take care of you. Some day you will owe to me your proper self-respect."

And she took her hand and pressed it gently.

"You have touched me!" cried the poor girl, "you have pressed my hand."

And before Madame de Piennes could draw her hand away she had seized it, and had covered it with her kisses and her tears.

"Calm yourself, calm yourself, my dear," said Madame de Piennes, "tell me nothing more. Now I know all about it and I know you better than you know yourself. It is I who am the doctor for your head—your poor, disordered head. I shall require you to obey me, just as you do your other doctor. I will send you one of my friends who is a preacher, you will listen to him. I will select some good books for you to read. We will have some little talks, you and I, and then, when you are better, we will make plans for your future."

The nurse came back from the drug store with the bottle of medicine. Arsène continued to weep. Madame de Piennes pressed her hand once more, placed the roll of gold pieces upon the little table and departed, more kindly dis-

posed toward her penitent, perhaps, than before she had heard her strange confession.

Why is it, madam, that one always loves the erring ones? From the prodigal son to your dog Diamond, who snaps at everybody, and is the very worst little beast that I know. One is the most interested in those who deserve it the least. Vanity! pure vanity, madam, that sentiment there! pride over a difficulty conquered! The father of the prodigal son conquered the devil and robbed him of his prey; you subdued the viciousness of Diamond by coaxing him with tid-bits. Madame de Piennes was proud to have conquered the perversity of a courtesan, to have destroyed by her eloquence, barriers which twenty years of vice had builded around a poor abandoned soul. And then, perhaps, shall I say it? to the pride of that victory, to the pleasure of having done a good deed, there was added the sentiment of curiosity which many virtuous women have to know a woman of the other sort. When a public singer enters a drawing-room I have remarked the looks of curiosity turned toward her. It is not the men who observe her the most closely. You, yourself, madam, the other evening at the theatre, did you not look with all your eyes at that variety actress who was pointed out to you in the dressing-room?

How can one be like that? How often one asks himself that question?

Thus, madam, Madame de Piennes thought much about Mademoiselle Arsène Guillot, and said to herself: "I will rescue her."

She sent her a priest, who exhorted her to repentance. Repentance was not difficult for poor Arsène, who, with the exception of a few brief hours of pleasure, had known only the miseries of life.

Say to one who is unhappy: "It is your fault," and he is only half convinced, but if at the same time you soften your reproach with a little consolation, he will bless you, and promise everything for the future. A Greek has said somewhere, or rather Amyot puts it into his mouth:

> The day that sets a man free of his chains,
> Strips him of half of his virtue and pains.

Which returns in simple prose to this aphorism: Misfortune makes us as gentle as lambs. The priest said to Madame de Piennes that while Mademoiselle Guillot was very ignorant, she was not bad at heart, and that he had great hopes of her salvation.

In truth, Arsène listened to him with respectful attention. She read the passages marked for

her perusal in the books chosen for her, as scrupulous to obey Madame de Piennes, as to follow the prescriptions of the doctor. But that which most won the heart of the good preacher, and appeared to her protectress the strongest evidence of moral healing, was the use made by Arsène Guillot of a portion of the little sum which had been placed in her hands. She had requested that a solemn mass be said at Saint Roch, for the soul of Pamèla Guillot, her dead mother. Assuredly, never had soul greater need of the prayers of the Church

II

One morning, as Madame de Piennes was dressing, a servant tapped lightly at the door of the dressing-room, and handed to Mademoiselle Josephine a visiting card which a young man had sent up.

"Max in Paris!" cried Madame de Piennes, glancing at the card; "hurry, mademoiselle, tell M. de Salligny to wait for me in the drawing-room."

A moment later laughter and suppressed cries were heard in the drawing-room, and

Mademoiselle Josephine returned with a heightened colour, and her cap very much awry.

"What is the matter, mademoiselle?" demanded Madame de Piennes.

"Nothing, madam, only M. de Salligny says that I have grown fat."

In reality the plumpness of Mademoiselle Josephine might have surprised M. de Salligny who had been travelling for more than two years. In days of old he had been a favourite of Mademoiselle Josephine, and very attentive to her mistress. Nephew of an intimate friend of Madame de Piennes, he had been seen constantly at her house in the train of his aunt. Moreover, it was almost the only respectable house where he was seen. Max de Salligny had the reputation of a worthless fellow, a gambler, quarreller, wine-bibber, but the best fellow in the world withal. He was the despair of his aunt, Madame Aubrée, who adored him nevertheless. Many times had she tried to draw him from the life which he led, but always had his evil habits triumphed over her wise counsels. Max was two years older than Madame de Piennes. They had known each other from childhood, and before her marriage he appeared to regard her with more than a common interest. Madame Aubrée often said to her: "My dear, if you chose,

I am sure that you could manage him with your little finger." Madame de Piennes—she was then Élise de Guicard—would perhaps have had courage to attempt the enterprise, for Max was so gay, so witty, so amusing at a house party, so untiring at a ball, that surely he ought to make a good husband; but the parents of Élise were more farseeing. Madame Aubrée herself would not altogether vouch for her nephew; it was ascertained that he had debts and a mistress; suddenly a duel took place over a performer at the Gymnasium. The marriage, which Madame de Piennes had never had very seriously in view, was declared to be impossible. Then M. de Piennes presented himself, a grave and moral man, rich moreover, and of good family. There is little to be said of him, excepting that he had the reputation of a gentleman which he merited. He talked little but when he did open his mouth, it was to say something of importance. Upon doubtful subjects he maintained a discreet silence. If he did not add great charm to assemblies which he frequented, he was nowhere out of place. He was everywhere well enough liked because of his wife, but when he was absent,—upon his estates, as was the case nine months of the year, and notably at the moment when my story begins,—nobody

noticed it, his wife scarcely more than the rest.

Madame de Piennes, having finished her toilet in five minutes, left her chamber in some agitation, for the arrival of Max de Salligny recalled to her the recent death of the friend whom she had loved the best in the world; it was, I believe, the sole recollection which presented itself to her memory, and vivid enough to arrest any embarrassing conjectures that a person in a less serious frame of mind would have formed over the crumpled cap of Mademoiselle Josephine. Upon nearing the drawing-room she was a little shocked to hear a fine bass voice, gaily singing to its own accompaniment upon the piano this Neapolitan barcarolle:

Addio, Teresa,
Teresa, addio!
Al mio ritorno,
Ti sposero.

She opened the door and interrupted the singer by extending to him her hand:

"My poor Max, how glad I am to see you again!"

Max hurriedly arose and shook her hand, regarding her wildly, without finding a single word to say.

"I was so sorry," continued Madame de

Piennes, " that I was unable to go to Rome when your good aunt was taken ill. I know the tender care with which you surrounded her, and I thank you very much for the last souvenir of her which you were kind enough to send me."

The face of Max, naturally bright, not to say merry, suddenly became grave.

" She talked so much of you," he said, " even to the last moment. You received her ring I see, and the book she was reading the morning——"

" Yes, Max, I thank you. You announced, in sending that sad present, that you were leaving Rome, but you did not give me your address; I did not know where to write you. My poor friend! to die so far from home! Happily, you hastened to her immediately. You are better than you wish to appear, Max—I know you well."

" My aunt said to me during her illness: ' When I am gone, there will be no one left to scold you but Madame de Piennes.' " (And he could not refrain from smiling.) " ' Try to avoid her scolding you too often.' You see, madam, that you acquit yourself badly of your prerogative."

" I hope that I shall have a sinecure now.

They tell me that you have reformed, settled down and become altogether reasonable?"

"And you are not deceived, madam; I promised my poor aunt to become a good citizen, and——"

"You will keep your promise, I am sure!"

"I shall try. While travelling it is easier than in Paris; however—think of it, madam, I am only here a few hours, and already I have had to resist temptation. As I was on my way here I met an old friend who invited me to dine with a crowd of worthless fellows,—and I refused."

"You did quite right."

"Yes, but need I say to you that I hoped that you would invite me?"

"How unfortunate! I am dining out. But to-morrow——"

"In that case, I no longer answer for myself. Yours the responsibility for the dinner-party which I make."

"Listen, Max: The important point is to begin well. Do not go to that bachelor dinner. I am to dine with Madame Darsenay; come there this evening and we will talk."

"Yes, but Madame Darsenay is a little tiresome; she will ask me a hundred questions. I

shall not be able to say one word to you; I shall say the improprieties; and besides she has a tall, raw-boned daughter who is perhaps unmarried still——"

"She is a charming girl—and in regard to improprieties, it is one to speak of her as you are doing."

"I am wrong, it is true; but—as I have but just arrived, would I not appear to be a little too attentive?"

"Very well, do as you please; but see here, Max,—as the friend of your aunt, I have the right to speak frankly to you—avoid your old associates. Time has naturally broken off the friendships which were worthless to you; do not renew them. I am sure of you so long as you are not under bad influences. At your age—at *our* age, one should be rational. But enough of good advice and sermonising! What have you been doing since we last met? I know that you travelled through Germany, then Italy; no more. You have written me twice only, if you will remember. Two letters in two years, you must know that that has scarcely kept me informed concerning you."

"Is it possible, madam? I am indeed culpable—but I am so—it must be confessed I suppose—so lazy!—I commenced writing you

scores of times, but what could I say to you that would interest you? I do not know how to write letters, I—if I had written to you as often as I thought of you, all the paper in Italy would not have sufficed for it."

"Very well; what have you been doing? How have you occupied yourself? I know already that it is not with letter-writing."

"Occupied! You know very well that I do not occupy myself, unfortunately. I have seen, I have strolled about. I had plans of painting, but the sight of so many beautiful pictures has effectually cured me of that useless passion. Ah!—and then old Nibby almost made an antiquarian of me. Yes, he persuaded me to order an excavation made. They found an old pipe, and I don't know how many bits of broken pottery. And then at Naples I took lessons in singing, but I am no more clever for it. I have——"

"I do not much approve of your music, although you have a fine voice and you sing well. That puts you in touch with people whose society you are altogether too fond of."

"I understand you; but at Naples, when I was there at least, there was scarcely any danger. The prima donna weighed three hundred pounds and the second singer had a mouth like an oven,

and a nose like the tower of Lebanon. In short, two years have passed without me being able to say how. I have done nothing, learned nothing, but I have lived two years almost unperceived."

"I would like to know that you were occupied. I would like to see you have a lively interest in something useful. I fear idleness for you."

"Frankly speaking, madam, my travels did this for me. While I accomplished nothing, I was not absolutely idle. When one sees things of interest, one is not bored; and I, when I am bored, am very apt to do foolish things. True, I have sown my wild oats, and I have likewise forgotten a certain number of expeditious ways which I had of spending my money. My poor aunt paid my debts, and I have made no others, I wish to make no others. I have enough to live as a bachelor; and as I make no pretensions of being richer than I am I shall not be extravagant. You smile; you do not believe in my reformation? You need the proof? Listen then to a fact. To-day, Famin, the friend who invited me to dinner, wished to sell me his horse. A thousand dollars! He is a superb animal! My first impulse was to buy him. Then I said to myself that I was not rich enough to put a

thousand dollars into a fancy, and I continued to walk."

"It is marvellous, Max. But do you know what it is necessary to do in order to continue undisturbed in that good resolution? It is necessary for you to marry."

"Ah! for me to marry? Why not? But who would have me? I, who have no right to be particular, I should wish for a wife— Oh! no, there is no one left who pleases me."

Madame de Piennes coloured slightly, and he continued without noticing it:

"A woman who would care for me—but don't you know, madam, that that would be almost a reason why I should not care for her?"

"Why so? How foolish!"

"Does not Othello say somewhere,—it is, I believe, to justify himself for the suspicions which he has against Desdemona: 'That woman must have a silly head and depraved tastes to have chosen me, me who am black!' Should I not say in turn: The woman who would care for me must have a strange head?"

"You have been bad enough, Max, to make it needless to picture yourself to be worse than you are. Do not speak so slightingly of yourself, for there are people who might take you at your word. For myself, I am sure, if some day

—yes, if you were to truly love a woman who would have all of your esteem—then you would appear to her worthy."

Madame de Piennes experienced some difficulty in finishing her badly turned sentence, and Max, who regarded her attentively and with extreme curiosity, did not aid her in the least.

"You mean to say," he finally continued, "that if I were really in love, one would love me in return, because then I should be worth the pains?"

"Yes, then you would be worthy to be loved."

"If it were only necessary to love in order to be loved. That is not altogether true what you say, madam— Pshaw! find me a woman brave enough, and I will marry. If she is not too homely, I am not too old to be inflamed still. —You can answer for me for the rest."

"Where do you come from now?" interrupted Madame de Piennes in a serious tone.

Max talked very laconically of his travels, but nevertheless in a way to indicate that he had not done as certain tourists, of whom the Greeks say: "Empty he went away, empty he has returned." His short observations denoted a sound mind, and one which did not form its opinions at second hand, although he was in

reality more cultured than he cared to appear. He withdrew presently, noticing that Madame de Piennes glanced at the clock, and promised, not without some embarrassment, that he would go to Madame Darsenay's in the evening.

He did not come, however, and Madame de Piennes was a little vexed about it. In return, he was at her house the following morning to apologise, excusing himself upon the plea of fatigue from his journey, which obliged him to remain at home; but he lowered his eyes and talked with such a hesitating tone that it was not necessary to have the cleverness of Madame de Piennes in reading physiognomies to perceive that he was not telling the truth. When he had concluded she menaced him with her finger, without replying.

"Do you not believe me?" he said.

"No! Fortunately, you do not yet know how to lie. It was not to rest yourself from your fatigue that you did not go to Madame Darsenay's yesterday. You did not stay at home."

"Very well," replied Max with a forced smile, "you are right. I dined at the Rocher-de-Cancale with its rogues, and then went to Famin's for tea; they would not let me go, and then I gambled."

"And you lost, that goes without saying."

"No, I won."

"So much the worse. I would like better if you had lost, especially if that could have disgusted you forever with a habit as foolish as it is detestable."

She bent over her work, and pursued her task with a somewhat affected industry.

"Were there many people at Madame Darsenay's?" demanded Max timidly.

"No, very few."

"No marriageable young ladies?"

"No."

"I am depending upon you, however, madam. You know what you promised me?"

"We have time enough to think of that."

There was an accent of coldness and constraint in the voice of Madame de Piennes which was not usual with her.

After a silence, Max continued with an air of humility:

"You are displeased with me, madam? Why don't you give me a good scolding as my aunt used to do, only to forgive me afterward? Come, do you wish me to give you my word never to gamble again?"

"When one makes a promise it is necessary to feel that he has the strength to keep it."

"A promise made to you, madam, I should keep; I believe that I have the strength and the courage."

"Well, then, Max, I accept it," she said, extending her hand to him.

"I won two hundred dollars," he continued; "do you wish it for your poor? Never would ill-gotten gains have been put to better use."

She hesitated a moment.

"Why not?" she said to herself; aloud: "Well, Max, you will remember the lesson. I enter you my debtor for two hundred dollars."

"My aunt used to say that the best way to keep out of debt is always to pay cash."

As he spoke he drew out his purse to get the bills. In its half-open folds Madame de Piennes thought that she saw a picture of a woman. Max noticed that she was looking at it, coloured, and hastened to close the purse and present her the money.

"I would like very much to see that purse—if that were possible," she added with an arch smile.

Max was completely disconcerted: he stammered a few unintelligible words, and endeavoured to turn the attention of Madame de Piennes.

Her first thought had been that the purse

contained the portrait of some Italian beauty; but the evident trouble of Max and the general colour of the miniature—that was all that she had been able to see of it—had presently aroused in her breast another suspicion. She had once given her portrait to Madame Aubrée; and she imagined that Max, in his quality of direct heir, had believed that he had the right to appropriate it. That appeared to her an enormous impropriety. However, she said nothing about it immediately; but when M. de Salligny was about to leave:

"By the way," she said to him, "your aunt had a portrait of me which I would like very much to see."

"I don't know—what portrait? What was it like?" demanded Max in an irresolute voice.

This time Madame de Piennes was determined not to notice that he was trying to deceive her.

"Look for it," she said in the most natural tone possible. "You will give me great pleasure."

Aside from the incident of the portrait she was well enough pleased with the docility of Max, and promised herself again to save a lost sheep.

The next day, Max had recovered the por-

trait and brought it to her with an air of indifference. He remarked that the resemblance had never been great, and that the painter had given her a stiffness of pose, and a severity of expression which were not at all natural. From that time his visits to Madame de Piennes were shorter, and he had with her an air of coolness that she had never seen before. She attributed that mood to the first efforts which he was making to keep his promise to her, and to resist his evil inclinations.

A fortnight after the arrival of M. de Salligny, Madame de Piennes went as usual to see her protégée, Arsène Guillot, whom she had not forgotten in the meantime, nor you either, madam, as I hope. After asking her several questions concerning her health and the instructions she was receiving, she observed that the sick girl was more prostrated than she had been for several days, and offered to read to her, to avoid tiring her with the effort of talking. The poor girl would doubtless have preferred to talk, rather than listen to the sort of reading proposed to her, for you may well believe that it was from a very serious book, and Arsène had never read anything but the lightest novels. It was a religious book that Madame de Piennes selected; but I shall not name it, in the first place to avoid

wronging its author, and in the second place because you might accuse me of wishing to draw some bad inference against such works in general. It suffices to say that the book in question was written by a young man of nineteen, and especially dedicated to the reconciliation of hardened sinners; that Arsène was extremely depressed, and that she had not been able to close her eyes the night before. At the third page, there happened what would inevitably have happened with any other book, serious or not: I mean to say that Mademoiselle Guillot closed her eyes and fell fast asleep. Madame de Piennes noticed it, and congratulated herself upon the calming effect which she had produced. At first she lowered her voice to avoid awakening the patient by stopping too suddenly, then she laid down the book and arose quietly to withdraw upon tiptoe; but the nurse usually spent her time with the janitress when Madame de Piennes was present, for her visits somewhat resembled those of a confessor. Madame de Piennes wished to await the return of the nurse; and as she was of all people the worst enemy of idleness, she looked about for something to employ her time while she remained with the sleeper. In an alcove of the chamber there was a table supplied with writing materials; she seated her-

self at it and began to write a note. As she was searching for a bit of sealing wax in the table drawer, some one entered the chamber precipitately, which awakened the sick girl.

"My God! What do I see?" cried Arsène in a voice so altered that Madame de Piennes trembled.

"Well, this is a pretty thing that I hear! What does it all mean? To throw herself out of the window like an imbecile! Did anybody ever see any one so foolish as this girl!"

I know not if I use the exact terms; it is at least the sense of the language used by the person who had come into the room, and who by the voice, Madame de Piennes recognised at once to be Max de Salligny. Several exclamations followed, a few suppressed cries from Arsène, and then a loud kiss. Presently Max resumed:

"Poor Arsène, in what condition do I find you? Do you know that I would never have deserted you, if Julie had told me your last address? But did any one ever see such folly!"

"Oh! Salligny! Salligny! how happy I am! How sorry I am for what I have done! You will no longer find me pretty. You will not care for me any more?"

"How silly you are," said Max. "Why did you not write me that you were in need of

money? What has become of your Russian? Has he left you, your Cossack?"

When she recognised the voice of Max, Madame de Piennes had at first been almost as much astonished as Arsène. Her surprise had prevented her from showing herself immediately; then she had begun to reflect whether to show herself or not, and when one reflects and listens at the same time, one does not decide quickly. The consequence was that she heard the edifying dialogue which I have just reported; but then she recognised that if she were to remain in the alcove she was exposed to the necessity of hearing more. She decided upon her course, and stepped into the chamber with the calm and dignified bearing which a self-possessed woman rarely loses, and which she commands at need.

"Max," she said, "you are injuring that poor girl; leave the room. Come and talk with me in an hour."

Max had turned as pale as death when Madame de Piennes appeared in the last place in the world where he would have expected to meet her; his first impulse was to obey, and he took a step toward the door.

"You are going!—don't go!" cried Arsène, raising herself in her bed with an effort of despair.

"My child," said Madame de Piennes, taking her hand, "be reasonable; listen to me. Remember what you have promised me!"

Then she cast a calm but imperious look toward Max, who went out immediately. Arsène fell back upon the bed; upon seeing him depart she had fainted.

Madame de Piennes and the nurse, who came in just after, revived her with the skill which women possess in such emergencies. By degrees Arsène regained consciousness. At first she cast a glance around the room, as though searching for him whom she remembered to have seen there but a few moments before; then she turned her great black eyes toward Madame de Piennes, and regarding her fixedly:

"Is he your husband?" she said.

"No," replied Madame de Piennes, colouring slightly, but without the sweetness of her voice being altered; "M. de Salligny is a relative of mine."

She thought that she might allow herself that little untruth, to explain the influence which she had over him.

"Then," said Arsène, "it is you that he loves!"

And she fixed her eyes steadily upon her, burning like two flames of fire.

"He!" A light flashed upon the brow of Madame de Piennes. For a moment her cheeks were the colour of scarlet, and her voice died upon her lips; but she quickly regained her serenity.

"You are mistaken, my dear child," she said in a grave tone. "M. de Salligny understands that he did wrong to awaken memories which are happily far from your recollection. You have forgotten——"

"Forgotten," cried Arsène, with a smile of the damned, which was pitiful to see.

"Yes, Arsène, you have renounced all of those foolish ideas of a time which will never return. Think, my poor child, it is to that sinful intimacy that you owe all of your misfortunes. Think——"

"He does not love you!" interrupted Arsène without listening to her, "he does not love you, and he understands a mere look! I saw your eyes and his, I am not deceived. In fact—it is just! You are beautiful, young, brilliant. I maimed, disfigured—nigh unto death——"

She could not finish. Sobs choked her voice, so strong, so painful, that the nurse cried that she would go for the doctor; for, she said, the doctor feared nothing so much as these convulsions, and if that were to continue the poor dear would die.

Little by little, the species of energy that Arsène had found in the keenness of her sorrow gave place to a stuporous collapse, which Madame de Piennes mistook for calmness. She continued her exhortations; but Arsène, immovable, did not listen to all of the good and beautiful reasons which were given her for preferring divine love rather than worldly; her eyes were dry, her teeth pressed convulsively together. While her protectress talked to her of heaven and the hereafter, she dreamed of the present. The sudden arrival of Max had instantly awakened in her breast foolish illusions, but the look of Madame de Piennes had dissipated them still more quickly. After the happy dream of a moment, Arsène awakened to the sad reality, grown a hundredfold more horrible for having been momentarily forgotten.

Your physician will tell you, madam, that shipwrecked sailors, overcome by sleep in the midst of their pangs of hunger, dream that they are feasting at a bountiful table. They awaken still more famished, and wish that they had not slept. Arsène suffered a torture comparable to these shipwrecked mariners. In days of old she had loved Max in such manner as she was capable of loving. It was with him that she would always have preferred going to the thea-

tre, or amusing herself at a picnic, it was of him that she talked incessantly to her friends. When Max left she had cried bitterly; but, nevertheless, she received the attentions of a Russian whom Max was delighted to have for a successor, because he took him for a gallant man, that is to say, for a generous one. So long as she was able to lead the mad life of women of her class, her love for Max was but an agreeable memory which sometimes made her sigh. She thought of him as one thinks of the amusements of his childhood, without however wishing to return to them; but when Arsène no longer had lovers, when she found herself abandoned, when she felt the full weight of her misery and shame, then her love for Max was purified in a measure, because it was the sole memory which awakened in her breast neither regrets nor remorse. It even raised her in her own eyes, and the more she felt herself degraded, the more she exalted Max in her imagination. "He was my friend, he loved me," she would say to herself with a sort of pride when she was seized with disgust in reflecting upon her depraved life. In prison at Minturnæ, Marius fortified his courage by saying to himself: "I overcame the Cimbri!" This pampered mistress—alas! she was that no longer—had nothing to oppose to her shame and despair but

this thought: "Max has loved me—he loves me still!" A moment she had been able to believe it; but now she was stripped even of her memories, the sole possession which remained to her in the world.

While Arsène abandoned herself to her bitter reflections, Madame de Piennes demonstrated to her with animation the necessity of renouncing for ever what she called her criminal errors. A strong conviction blunts the sensibilities; and as a surgeon applies steel and cautery to a wound, without heeding the cries of the patient, so Madame de Piennes pursued her task with pitiless firmness. She told her that that period of happiness in which poor Arsène took refuge in order to escape from herself, was a period of crime and shame for which she was paying the just penalty. These illusions, it was necessary to detest, and to banish them from her heart; the man whom she looked upon as her protector, and almost a tutelary genius, should no longer be to her eyes but a pernicious accomplice, a seducer from whom she should flee for ever.

That word "seducer," of which Madame de Piennes was not able to feel the ridiculousness, almost caused Arsène to smile in the midst of her tears; but her worthy protectress failed to observe it. She continued imperturbably her

exhortation, and ended with a peroration which redoubled the sobs of the poor girl: "You will never see him more."

The arrival of the doctor and the complete prostration of the patient reminded Madame de Piennes that she had already said enough. She pressed the hand of Arsène, and said to her in leaving:

"Be brave, my child, and God will not forsake you."

She had accomplished a duty; there remained another still more difficult. Another culprit awaited her, whose mind she must open to repentance; and in spite of the confidence which she derived from her religious zeal, in spite of the influence which she exercised over Max, and of which she already had the proof, finally, in spite of the good opinion which she conserved at the bottom of her heart for that libertine, she experienced a strange anxiety in thinking of the combat in which she was about to engage.

Before entering upon that terrible struggle, she wished to renew her strength, and entering the church, she demanded of God renewed inspiration for defending her cause.

When she reached home she was told that M. de Salligny was in the drawing-room, where he had been waiting for her for a long time. She

found him pale, agitated, full of uneasiness. They seated themselves. Max dared not to open his mouth; and Madame de Piennes, agitated herself, without knowing positively why, remained silent for some time, and only furtively regarding her companion. At last she began:

"Max," she said, "I am not going to reproach you——"

He raised his head proudly enough. Their glances met, and he lowered his eyes immediately.

"Your good heart," she continued, "tells you more at this moment than I should be able to do. It is a lesson which Providence has wished to give you; I hope, I am convinced—it will not be lost."

"Madam," interrupted Max, "I scarcely know what has happened. That unfortunate girl threw herself out of the window, as I was told; but I have not the vanity, I should say the sorrow—to believe that the former relations between us have been the means of determining that act of madness."

"Say rather, Max, that when you were doing evil, you did not foresee the consequences. When you led that young girl astray, you did not think that one day she would attempt her life."

"Madam," cried Max with some vehemence, "permit me to say to you that it was not I who

first led Arsène Guillot astray. When I met her she was already started upon her career. She was my mistress, I do not deny it. I will even acknowledge that I loved her—as one can love a person of that class. I believe that she had for me a little stronger attachment than for another. But all relations between us came to an end long ago, and without her expressing any great regret. The last time that I had any news of her I wished to give her some money; but she refused it. She was ashamed to demand more of me, for she had a certain amount of pride. Misery forced her to that terrible resolution. I am very sorry for it. But I repeat to you, madam, that in all that, I have nothing with which to reproach myself."

Madame de Piennes crumpled some work upon the table, then she resumed:

"Doubtless, from a worldly point of view you are guiltless, you have incurred no responsibility, but there is a morality other than that of the world, and it is by its rules that I would like to see you guided. At this time you are not in a condition to listen to me, perhaps. Let us leave that. To-day, that which I have to ask of you is a promise which you will not refuse, I am sure. That unhappy girl is moved to repentance. She has listened with attention to the

counsels of a venerable priest who wished to see her. We have every reason to hope for her. You must not see her again, for her heart is still hesitating between good and evil, and unfortunately, you have neither the will, nor perhaps the power to be of use to her. By seeing her you would do her much harm. That is why I ask you to promise that you will not go to see her again."

Max made a movement of surprise.

" You will not refuse me, Max; if your aunt were living she would make you the same plea. Imagine that it is she who speaks to you."

" For the love of God, madam, what is this you demand of me? What wrong do you wish me to do to that poor girl? Is it not, on the other hand, an obligation for me, who have known her in the time of her follies, not to abandon her now that she is ill, and very dangerously ill, if what I am told is true? "

" That is doubtless the moral of the world, but it is not my own. The more dangerous her malady the more important it is that you should not see her again."

" But, madam, consider that in her condition it would be impossible, even to a prudery the most easily alarmed. Why, madam, if I had a dog that was ill, and I knew that it would give him a certain pleasure to see me, I should deem

myself guilty of an unkindness if I were to allow him to die alone. It is not possible that you think otherwise, you who are so kind and so good. Think of it, madam; for my part, I should consider it downright cruelty."

"Just now I asked you to make me that promise in the name of your good aunt—in behalf of the friendship which you have for me. Now, it is on account of that unhappy girl herself that I ask it. If you really love her——"

"Ah! madam, I beg of you do not compare thus, things incapable of comparison. Believe me, madam, it pains me exceedingly to refuse any request of yours whatsoever, but in this case, I believe that honour compels me. That word displeases you? Forget it. Only, madam, in my turn, let me implore you for pity of that unfortunate girl—and also a little for pity of me. If I have done wrong—if I have been the means of contributing to her ruin—I should now take care of her. It would be terrible to abandon her. I should never forgive myself. No, I can not abandon her. You will not exact that of me, madam."

"She would not lack for care from others. But, answer me, Max: do you love her?"

"Do I love her! Do I love her! No, I do not love her. That is a word which is out of

place here. Love her! Alas! no. I only sought in her society distraction from a more serious sentiment which it was necessary to combat. That appears to you ridiculous, incomprehensible? The purity of your mind would not admit that one could seek a remedy like that. Well, that is not the worst deed of my life. If the rest of us had not sometimes the means of diverting our passions—perhaps now—perhaps it would be I who had thrown myself out of the window. But I do not know what I am saying, and you must not listen to me. I scarcely comprehend myself."

"I asked you if you loved her," resumed Madame de Piennes with lowered eyes and some hesitation, "because if you had a—a friendship for her, you would doubtless have courage to do her a little evil in order to do her a great good afterward. To be sure, the sorrow of not seeing you would be hard for her to bear; but it would be much more serious now to turn her from the path into which she has been almost miraculously led. It is important for her salvation, Max, that she should entirely forget a time which your presence would recall too vividly to her mind."

Max shook his head without replying. He was not a believer, and the word "salvation," which had so much weight with Madame de

Piennes did not appeal so strongly to his mind. But upon that point it was not necessary to dispute with her. He always carefully avoided revealing to her his doubts, and this time, as usual, he kept silent; it was easy to see however that he was not convinced.

"I will talk to you in the language of the world," pursued Madame de Piennes, "since unfortunately it is the only one which you can comprehend. We will argue, in fact, upon a mathematical calculation. She has nothing to gain by seeing you, but much to lose. Now, make your choice."

"Madam," said Max with a voice of emotion, "you no longer doubt, I hope, that there can be any other sentiment on my part in regard to Arsène but an interest—quite natural. What danger would there be? None whatever. Do you distrust me? Do you think that I wish to injure the good counsels which you give her? No, indeed! I, who detest sad scenes, who avoid them with a sort of abhorrence, do you believe that I seek the sight of a dying girl with culpable intentions? I repeat it, madam, it is for me a sense of duty, an expiation, a punishment if you will, which I seek concerning her."

At those words Madame de Piennes raised her head and regarded him fixedly with an air

of exaltation which gave to her features an expression of sublimity.

"An expiation, you say, a punishment?—Very well, yes! Unknown to you, Max, you obey perhaps an *admonition from on high,* and you are right in resisting me. Yes, I consent to it. See that girl, and may she become the means of your salvation, as you have nearly been that of her ruin."

Probably Max did not comprehend as well as you, madam, the meaning of the term, admonition from on high. This sudden change of resolution astonished him; he knew not to what to attribute it; he knew not if he ought to thank Madame de Piennes for having yielded in the end; but for the moment his great preoccupation was to divine if his obstinacy had wearied, or indeed convinced, the person whom he feared above all things to displease.

"Only, Max," pursued Madame de Piennes, "I have to demand of you, or rather I exact of you——"

She paused a moment, and Max nodded his head, indicating that he submitted to everything.

"I exact," she resumed, "that you only see her in my presence."

He gave a start of surprise, but he hastened to add that he would obey.

"I do not trust you absolutely," she continued, with a smile. "I still fear that you will spoil my work, and I wish so much to succeed. Under my supervision, on the other hand, you might become a valuable aid and then, as I hope, your obedience would be rewarded."

As she said these words she extended her hand to him. It was agreed that Max should go the following day to see Arsène Guillot, and that Madame de Piennes should precede him to prepare her for the visit.

You understand her design. At first she had thought that she would find Max fully repentant, and that she could easily draw from the example of Arsène the text of an eloquent sermon against his evil passions; but, contrary to her expectations, he refused to accept any responsibility. It was necessary to change her exordium, and, at a decisive moment to change a studied address is an enterprise almost as perilous as to change the order of battle in the midst of an ambush. Madame de Piennes had not been able to improvise a manœuvre. Instead of preaching to Max she had discussed with him a question of expediency. Suddenly a new idea presented itself to her mind. The remorse for his complicity would touch him, she thought. The Christian death of a woman whom he had loved

(and unfortunately she could not doubt but it was near) would doubtless carry a decisive blow. It was with such a hope that she suddenly determined to permit Max to see Arsène. She also gained an excuse for postponing the exhortation which she had planned; for I think that I have already said to you that in spite of her keen desire to save a man whose errors she deplored, she shrank involuntarily from the thought of engaging with him in so serious a discussion.

She had counted much upon the goodness of her cause; still she doubted of her success, and to fail was to despair of the salvation of Max, it was to condemn herself to a change of sentiment concerning him. The devil, perhaps, to prevent her from guarding herself against the warm affection which she bore for a friend of childhood, the devil had taken pains to justify that affection upon the strength of a Christian hope. All weapons are acceptable to the Tempter, and such practices are familiar to him; that is why the Portuguese say quite elegantly: " De boâs intençôes esta a inferno cheio " : " Hell is paved with good intentions." You say in French that it is paved with women's tongues, and that amounts to the same thing; for women, in my opinion, always mean well.

You recall me to my story. The following

day, then, Madame de Piennes went to see her protégée whom she found very weak, very much depressed, but nevertheless more calm and resigned than she had expected. She talked of M. de Salligny, but with more consideration than the day before. Arsène, in truth, ought absolutely to give him up and no longer to think of him but to deplore their mutual blindness. She ought further, and it was a part of her repentance, she ought to show her penitence to Max himself, to set him the example of a changed life, and to secure for his future the peace of conscience which she herself enjoyed. To these Christian exhortations Madame de Piennes did not fail to add certain worldly arguments, such as, for example, that Arsène, truly loving M. de Salligny, ought to wish for his welfare above all things, and that by her change of conduct she would merit the esteem of a man who had not really as yet been able to accord it to her.

Anything severe or sorrowful in her discourse was suddenly effaced when Madame de Piennes in finishing announced to her that she would see Max again and that he would soon be there. At the lively colour which suddenly suffused her cheeks, so long pale from suffering, at the extraordinary brilliancy of her eyes, Madame de Piennes almost repented of giving her consent

to that interview; but it was too late to change her resolution. She employed the few minutes remaining to her before the arrival of Max in pious and energetic exhortations, but they were listened to with marked inattention, for Arsène only seemed interested in arranging her hair and smoothing the crumpled ribbon of her cap.

At last M. de Salligny appeared, contracting all of his features to give them an air of cheerfulness and assurance. He asked how she was feeling in a tone of voice which he strove to make natural, but which no cold in the head would have been able to give him. On her side, Arsène was no more at her ease; she stammered, she was unable to utter a single sentence, but she took the hand of Madame de Piennes and carried it to her lips as though to thank her. What was said during the next quarter of an hour was what is said everywhere between embarrassed people. Madame de Piennes alone maintained her accustomed calm demeanour, or rather, being better prepared she was more self-controlled. She frequently replied for Arsène, who found that her interpreter expressed her thoughts rather badly. The conversation languishing, Madame de Piennes remarked that the invalid was coughing a good deal, reminded her that the doctor had forbidden her to talk, and address-

ing herself to Max she told him that he would do better to read aloud for a time, rather than tire Arsène with his questions. Max seized a book with alacrity and seated himself near the window, for the light in the room was a little dim. He read without much comprehension. Doubtless Arsène did not comprehend any more, but she had the air of listening with a lively interest. Madame de Piennes worked at a piece of embroidery which she had brought, the nurse pinched herself to avoid falling asleep. The eyes of Madame de Piennes wandered incessantly from the bed to the window, never did Argus keep so good a watch with his hundred eyes. At the end of a few minutes she leaned toward the ear of Arsène:

"How well he reads!" she whispered.

Arsène gave her a look which contrasted strangely with the smile upon her lips:

"Oh! yes," she replied.

Then her eyes drooped, and a great tear would appear from time to time upon her lashes and roll down her cheeks without her heeding it. Max did not once turn his head. After he had read a few pages Madame de Piennes said to Arsène.

"We are going to let you rest, my child. I

fear that we may have tired you a little. We will come back to see you presently."

She arose and Max arose like her shadow. Arsène bade him farewell without scarcely regarding him.

" I am pleased with you, Max," said Madame de Piennes, whom he had accompanied to her door, " and still more with her. That poor girl is filled with resignation. She sets you a good example."

" To suffer and be silent, madam, is it very difficult to learn? "

" The most important thing to learn is to school one's mind against evil thoughts."

Max saluted her and hurried away.

When Madame de Piennes went to see Arsène the following day she found her contemplating a bouquet of rare flowers which had been placed upon the table beside her bed.

" M. de Salligny sent them to me," she said. " He sent some one to inquire for me, but he has not been here."

" The flowers are very beautiful," said Madame de Piennes a little drily.

" I used to be very fond of flowers," said the invalid, sighing as she said it; " and he spoiled me. M. de Salligny spoiled me by giving me all the most beautiful ones that he could find. But

that makes no difference now. These are too fragrant. You may have this bouquet, madam; he will not care if I give it to you."

"No, my dear; it gives you pleasure to look at the flowers," said Madame de Piennes, in a gentler tone, for she had been greatly affected by the note of profound sadness in the voice of poor Arsène. "I will take the fragrant ones, you keep the camellias."

"No, I detest camellias. They remind me of the only quarrel that we ever had—when I was with him."

"Think no more of those follies, my dear child."

"One day," continued Arsène, looking steadily at Madame de Piennes, "one day I found a beautiful red camellia in a glass of water in his room. I wished to take it, he would not let me, he even forbade me to touch it. I insisted, I said very insulting things to him. He took it, locked it in a closet and put the key in his pocket. I acted like a fiend incarnate, I even smashed a porcelain vase of which he was very fond. It was of no use. I saw very well that he had received it from some woman of respectability. I have never known where that camellia came from."

As she spoke, Arsène regarded Madame de

Piennes with a fixed and almost spiteful look, which caused her to drop her eyes involuntarily. There was a long silence, broken only by the oppressed breathing of the invalid. Madame de Piennes had a confused recollection of an incident in regard to a camellia. One day, when she was dining with Madame Aubrée, Max had said to her that his aunt had been congratulating him upon his birthday, and asked her to give him a bouquet also. She had laughingly taken a camellia from her hair and given it to him. But why had such an insignificant act been so impressed upon her memory? Madame de Piennes was unable to explain it to herself. She was almost alarmed by it. Scarcely had she recovered from her confusion of mind in regard to it when Max entered and she felt herself growing red in the face.

"Thank you for your flowers," said Arsène; "but they sicken me. They will not be lost; I have given them to madam. Do not make me talk, that is forbidden. Will you read me something?"

Max seated himself and began to read. This time nobody listened, I think. Each one, including the reader, followed the thread of his own thoughts.

When Madame de Piennes arose to depart,

she was leaving the bouquet upon the table, but Arsène reminded her of her forgetfulness. She took it consequently, annoyed with herself for having shown, perhaps, some affectation by not accepting that trifle in the first place.

"What harm could there be in that?" she thought. But there was already harm since it made her ask herself that simple question.

Max followed her home unbidden. They seated themselves, and, averting their eyes from each other, they were silent long enough to be embarrassed by it.

"That poor girl," said Madame de Piennes at last, "grieves me profoundly. It appears as though all hope were at an end."

"Did you see the doctor?" demanded Max. "What did he say?"

Madame de Piennes shook her head. "She has but a few more days to live. They administered the last sacraments to her this morning."

"Her face haunts one," said Max, advancing into the embrasure of a window, probably to hide his emotion.

"No doubt, it is cruel to die at her age," resumed Madame de Piennes sadly; "but had she lived longer, who knows but it would have been a misfortune to her? In saving her from a violent death Providence wished to give her time

for repentance. It is a great mercy, which she herself fully appreciates now. The Abbé Dubignon is much pleased with her; it is not necessary to pity her so much, Max!"

"I don't know that it is necessary to pity those who die young," he replied a little gruffly. "For myself, I should like to die young; what most affects me is to see her suffer so."

"Physical suffering is often of benefit to the soul."

Max, without replying, went and placed himself at the other end of the room in an obscure corner, partially hidden by thick curtains. Madame de Piennes worked, or pretended to work, upon a piece of tapestry which she had in her hands; but it seemed to her that she felt the regard of Max like a heavy weight upon her. That regard which she shunned, she imagined she felt wandering over her hands, her shoulders, and across her brow. It seemed to her to rest upon her foot, and she hastened to hide it beneath her robe. There is perhaps some truth in that which is called magnetic fluid, madam.

"Do you know Admiral de Rigny?" Max suddenly demanded.

"Yes, slightly."

"I shall perhaps have a favour to ask of you concerning him—a letter of recommendation."

"For what?"

"For several days I have been making plans," he continued with affected cheerfulness. "I am trying to be converted, and I would like to do some pious act, but am embarrassed how to begin it."

Madame de Piennes glanced at him a little severely.

"This is my position," he continued. "I am very sorry that I am not versed in military practice, but that can be learned—and, even as I have the honour of telling you, I have an extraordinary desire to go to Greece and there strive to kill a few Turks for the highest glory of the Cross."

"To Greece!" cried Madame de Piennes, dropping her ball.

"To Greece. Here, I am doing nothing; I am weary of everything; I am good for nothing, I can do nothing of any use; there is nobody in the world to whom I am of any account. Why should I not go to reap laurels or sacrifice my life for a good cause? Moreover, I scarcely see any other means of winning glory and having my name inscribed in the Temple of Fame, as I so much desire. Picture to yourself, madam, what an honour for me when you read in the paper: 'Word is received from Tripoli

that M. Max de Salligny, a young Philhellene of the greatest promise'—one can well say that in a paper—'of the greatest promise, has just perished, a victim to his enthusiasm for the sacred cause of religion and liberty. The ferocious Kourschid Pacha has carried his forgetfulness of the proprieties to the extent of having him beheaded.' That is really the worst part of me in everybody's opinion, is it not, madam?"

And he broke into a forced laugh.

"Are you talking seriously, Max? You would go to Greece?"

"Very seriously, madam, only I shall strive to have my obituary notice appear at the latest possible date."

"What would you do in Greece? The Greeks are not lacking for soldiers. You would make an excellent soldier, I am sure; but——"

"A superb grenadier of five feet six!" he exclaimed, raising himself upon his feet; "the Greeks would be very hard to please if they did not wish for a recruit like this. Joking aside, madam," he added, dropping into an armchair, "it is, I believe, the best thing for me to do. I can not stay in Paris"—he pronounced these words with a certain degree of violence—"here I am unhappy, here I should do a hundred foolish things—I have not the strength to resist— But

we will talk of this again; I do not leave immediately—but I shall go. Oh! yes, it is necessary; I have taken my oath upon it. Do you know that for two days I have been studying Greek? 'Ζωήμον σὰς ἀγαπῶ.' It is a beautiful language, is it not?"

Madame de Piennes had read Lord Byron and remembered that Greek phrase, the refrain of one of his fugitive poems. The translation, as you know, is found in a foot-note; it is: "My life, I love you." It is a fashion of speech peculiar to that country. Madame de Piennes cursed her too good memory; she was careful not to ask the meaning of that Greek phrase, and only feared that her countenance might betray the fact that she had understood.

Max had wandered to the piano, and his fingers falling upon the keys as by accident, performed a few melancholy chords. Suddenly, he took his hat; and turning to Madame de Piennes asked if she were going to Madame Darsenay's that evening.

"I think so," she replied, with some hesitation.

He pressed her hand and immediately took his departure, leaving her a prey to an agitation that she had never before experienced.

All of her ideas were so confused, and fol-

lowed each other with so much rapidity that she was unable to fix upon any one of them. It was like the series of impressions which appear and disappear as suddenly when one views the landscape from a car window. But, as, in the midst of the most fleeting panorama the eye which does not perceive all the details nevertheless gets a general impression of the whole, so, in the midst of the chaotic thoughts which besieged her, Madame de Piennes experienced a sensation of terror and felt as though she were being borne upon a steep plane to the brink of a frightful precipice. That Max was in love with her she had no doubt. That love (she called it: "that affection") was of long standing; but hitherto she had not been alarmed by it. Between a devout person like herself and a libertine like Max there was an insurmountable barrier which had reassured her until now. Although she was not insensible to the pleasure or the vanity of inspiring a serious sentiment in a man as frivolous as was Max in her estimation, she had never thought that that affection could some day become dangerous to her peace of mind. Now that the scapegrace had mended his ways she began to fear him. His conversion, which she attributed to herself, might become for her and for him a cause of sorrow and torture. At times

she tried to persuade herself that the dangers which she vaguely foresaw had no real foundation. That journey, suddenly resolved upon, the change which she had remarked in the conduct of M. de Salligny might strictly be explained by the love which he still bore for Arsène Guillot; but, strange to say! that thought was to her more insupportable than the others, and it was almost a relief to her to demonstrate to her own mind its improbability.

Madame de Piennes spent the entire evening in creating phantoms, destroying them and recreating them again. She did not wish to go to Madame Darsenay's, and, in order to be more sure of herself she allowed her coachman to go out, and resolved to retire at an early hour; but as soon as she had taken that high-minded resolution, and there was no longer a means of retracting it, she represented to herself that it was a weakness unworthy of her, and repented of it. She feared above all things, that Max would suspect the cause; and as she could not disguise from herself the real motive for staying at home, she already looked upon herself as guilty, for that sole preoccupation concerning M. de Salligny appeared to her a crime. She prayed for a long time, but without being comforted by it . I know not at what hour she succeeded in falling

asleep; what is certain is that when she awakened, her ideas were as confused as the evening before, and she was as far as ever from forming a resolution.

As she was at breakfast—for one always breakfasts, madam, especially when one has dined poorly—she read in the paper that—I know not what—Pacha had sacked a city in Roumelia. Women and children had been massacred; many Philhellenes had perished arms in hand, or had been slowly put to death by horrible tortures. That newspaper article was little calculated to give Madame de Piennes a taste for the journey to Greece for which Max was preparing himself. She was meditating sadly over what she was reading, when a servant handed her a note from him. The evening before he had been greatly bored at Madame Darsenay's; and, disquieted not to have found Madame de Piennes there, he wrote her for news of herself, and to ask at what hour she was going to see Arsène Guillot. Madame de Piennes had not the courage to write, and sent word that she would go at the accustomed hour. Then the idea came to her to go at once, in order to avoid meeting Max; but, upon reflection, she decided that that was a childish and shameful falsehood, worse than her weakness of yesterday. She therefore forti-

fied her courage, said a fervent prayer, and, when it was time, she went out and walked with a firm step to the chamber of Arsène.

III

She found the poor girl in a pitiful condition. It was apparent that her last hour was near, and since the day before the disease had made horrible progress. Her breathing was no more than a painful death-rattle, and they told Madame de Piennes that she had been delirious several times during the morning, and that the doctor did not think that she could live until the morrow.

Arsène, however, recognised her protectress and thanked her for coming to see her.

"You will no longer fatigue yourself by mounting my staircase," she said to her in a voice almost inaudible.

Each word seemed to cost her a painful effort and weaken the little strength remaining to her. It was necessary to lean over her bed in order to hear her. Madame de Piennes had taken her hand, and it was already cold and lifeless.

Max arrived presently and silently ap-

proached the bed of the dying girl. She made him a slight sign with her head, and observing that he had a book in his hand:

"You will not read to-day," she murmured feebly.

Madame de Piennes glanced at the book, so-called; it was a bound chart of Greece, which he had purchased in passing.

The Abbé Dubignon, who had been with Arsène throughout the morning, observing how rapidly her strength was failing, wished to turn to profit for her salvation, the few minutes that still remained to him. He waved aside Max and Madame de Piennes, and bending over the bed of suffering, he addressed to the poor girl the solemn and consoling words which religion reserves for such moments. In a corner of the chamber Madame de Piennes was kneeling in prayer, and Max, standing by the window seemed transformed to a statue.

"You forgive all those who have injured you, my daughter," said the preacher, in a voice choked with emotion.

"Yes! May they be happy!" replied the dying girl, with an effort to make herself heard.

"Put your trust in God's mercy, my daughter!" continued the abbé. "Repentance opens the gates of heaven."

For some minutes longer the abbé continued his exhortations; then he ceased to speak, uncertain whether he had anything but a corpse before him. Madame de Piennes arose softly, and every one remained for a time immovable, anxiously regarding the livid face of Arsène. Her eyes were closed. Each one held his breath, lest he should disturb the terrible sleep which had perhaps already begun for her, and there could be distinctly heard in the chamber the ticking of a watch which lay upon the table.

"She is gone, the poor girl!" the nurse said at last, after holding her snuff-box to the lips of Arsène; "see, the glass is not tarnished. She is dead!"

"Poor child!" exclaimed Max, arousing from the stupor in which he seemed to be lost. "What happiness has she had in this world?"

Suddenly, and as though reanimated by his voice, Arsène opened her eyes.

"I have loved," she murmured in a hollow voice.

She moved her fingers and appeared to wish to stretch out her hands. Max and Madame de Piennes had approached and each took one of them.

"I have loved," she repeated with a sad smile.

Those were her last words. Max and Madame de Piennes held her cold hands for a long time without daring to raise their eyes.

IV

Well, madam, you tell me that my story is finished, and you do not wish to hear more. I would have believed that you would be curious to know whether M. de Salligny made the voyage to Greece or not; if—but it is late, you have had enough. Very well! At least refrain from rash judgments, I protest that I have said nothing to authorise you to indulge in them.

Above all, do not doubt that my story is true. You do doubt it? Go to Père-Lachaise: twenty paces to the left of the tomb of General Foy, you will find a simple stone, surrounded with flowers always well kept. Upon the stone you can read the name of my heroine graven in large characters: ARSÈNE GUILLOT, and, by bending over that tomb, you will discover, if the rain has not already effaced it, a line traced with a pencil, in very fine writing: "Poor Arsène! she prays for us."

THE ABBÉ AUBAIN

IT were idle to say how the following letters came into our possession. They seem to us curious, moral and instructive. We publish them without any change other than the suppression of certain proper names, and a few passages which have no connection with the incident in the life of the Abbé Aubain.

THE ABBÉ AUBAIN

From Madame de P—— to Madame de G——

NOIRMOUTIERS, . . . *November*, 1844.

I PROMISED to write to you, my dear Sophie, and I keep my word; besides, I have nothing better to do these long evenings.

My last letter informed you that I had made the simultaneous discovery that I was thirty and ruined. For the first of these misfortunes, alas! there is no remedy; as for the second, we have resigned ourselves to it badly enough, but, after all, we are resigned. We must pass at least two years, to repair our fortune, in the dreary manor-house, from whence I write this to you. I have been simply heroic. Directly I knew of the state of our finances I proposed to Henry that he should economise in the country, and eight days later we were at Noirmoutiers.

I will not tell you anything of the journey. It was many years since I had found myself alone with my husband for such a length of time. Of course, we were both in a bad temper;

but, as I was thoroughly determined to put on a good face, all went off well.

You were acquainted with my good resolutions, and you shall see if I am keeping to them. Behold us, then, installed. By the way, Noirmoutiers, from a picturesque point of view, leaves nothing to be desired. There are woods, and cliffs, and the sea within a quarter of a league. We have four great towers, the walls of which are fifteen feet thick. I have fitted a workroom in the recess of the window. My drawing-room, which is sixty feet long, is decorated with figured tapestry; it is truly magnificent when lighted up by eight candles: quite a Sunday illumination. I die of fright every time I pass it after sunset. We are very badly furnished, as you may well believe. The doors do not fit closely, the wainscoting cracks, the wind whistles, and the sea roars in the most lugubrious fashion imaginable. Nevertheless I am beginning to grow accustomed to it.

I arrange and mend things, and I plant; before the hard frosts set in I shall have made a tolerable habitation. You may be certain that your tower will be ready by the spring. If I could but have you here now! The advantage of Noirmoutiers is that we have no neighbours: we are completely isolated. I am thankful to

say I have no other callers but my priest, the Abbé Aubain. He is a well-mannered young man, although he has arched and bushy eyebrows and great dark eyes like those of a stage villain. Last Sunday he did not give us so bad a sermon for the country. It sounded very appropriate. "Misfortune was a benefit from Providence to purify our souls." Be it so. At that rate we ought to give thanks to that honest stockbroker who desired to purify our souls by running off with our money.

Good-bye, dear friend.

My piano has just come, and some big packing-cases. I must go and unpack them all.

P.S.—I reopen this letter to thank you for your present. It is most beautiful, far too beautiful for Noirmoutiers. The grey hood is charming. I recognise your taste there. I shall put it on for Mass on Sunday; perhaps a commercial traveller will be there to admire it. But for whom do you take me, with your novels? I wish to be, I *am*, a serious-minded person. Have I not sufficiently good reasons? I am going to educate myself. On my return to Paris, in three years from now (good heavens! I shall be thirty-three), I mean to be a Philaminte. But really, I do not know what books to ask you to send me. What do you advise me to learn? German

or Latin? It would be very nice to read *Wilhelm Meister* in the orginal, or the tales of Hoffmann. Noirmoutiers is the right place for whimsical stories. But how am I to learn German at Noirmoutiers? Latin would suit me well, for I think it so unfair that men should keep it all to themselves. I should like to have lessons given me by my priest.

Letter II

The same to the same.

Noirmoutiers, . . . *December,* 1844.

You may well be astonished. The time passes more quickly than you would believe, more quickly than I should have believed myself. The weakness of my lord and master supports my courage through everything. Really, men are very inferior to us. He is depressed beyond measure. He gets up as late as he can, rides his horse or goes hunting, or else pays calls on the dullest people imaginable—lawyers and magistrates who live in town, that is to say, six leagues from here. He goes to see them when it is wet! He began to read *Mauprat* eight days ago, and he is still in the first volume. " It is much better to be pleased with oneself than to slander one's

neighbours." This is one of your proverbs. But I will leave him in order to talk of myself.

The country air does me incalculable good. I am magnificently well, and when I see myself in the glass (such a glass!) I do not look thirty; but then I walk a good deal. Yesterday I managed to get Henry to come with me to the seashore. While he shot gulls I read the pirate's song in the *Giaour*. On the beach, facing a rough sea, the fine verses seemed finer than ever. Our sea can not rival that of Greece, but it has its poetry, as the sea everywhere has. Do you know what strikes me in Lord Byron?—his insight and understanding of nature. He does not talk of the sea from only having eaten turbot and oysters. He has sailed on it; he has seen storms. All his descriptions are from life. Our poets put rhyme first, then common sense—if there is any in verse. While I walk up and down, reading, watching and admiring, the Abbé Aubain—I do not know whether I have mentioned my Abbé to you; he is the village priest—came up and joined me. He is a young priest who often comes to me. He is well educated, and knows " how to talk with well-bred people." Besides, from his large dark eyes and pale, melancholy look, I can very well see that he has an interesting story, and I try to make it up for

myself. We talked of the sea, of poetry; and, what will surprise you much in a priest of Noirmoutiers, he talked well. Then he took me to the ruins of an old abbey upon a cliff and pointed out to me a great gateway carved with delightful goblins. Oh! if only I had the money to restore it all! After this, in spite of Henry's remonstrances, who wanted his dinner, I insisted upon going to the priest's house to see a curious relic which the curé had found in a peasant's house. It was indeed very beautiful: a small box of Limoges enamel which would make a lovely jewel-case. But, good gracious! what a dwelling! And we, who believe ourselves poor! Imagine a tiny room on the ground floor, badly paved, whitewashed, furnished with a table and four chairs, and an armchair padded with straw, with a little flat cake of a cushion in it, stuffed, I should think, with peachstones, and covered with small pieces of white and red cotton. On the table were three or four large Greek and Latin folios. These were the Fathers of the Church, and below, as though hidden, I came upon *Jocelin.* He blushed. He was very attentive, however, in doing the honours of his wretched lodgings without pride or false modesty. I suspected he had had a romantic story. I soon had a proof of it. In the Byzantine

Then he took the bouquet and slipped it carefully in his table drawer.

An etching from a drawing by G. Fraipont.

myself. We talked of the sea, of poetry; and, what will surprise you much in a priest of Noirmoutiers, he talked well. Then he took me to the ruins of an old abbey upon a cliff and pointed out to me a great gateway carved with delightful goblins. Oh! if only I had the money to restore it all! After this, in spite of Henry's remonstrances, who wanted his dinner, I insisted upon going to the priest's house to see a curious relic which the curé had found in a peasant's house. It was indeed very beautiful: a small box of Limoges enamel which would make a lovely jewel-case. But, good gracious! what a dwelling! And we, who believe ourselves poor! Imagine a tiny room on the ground floor, badly paved, whitewashed, furnished with a table and four chairs, and an armchair padded with straw, with a little flat cake of a cushion in it, stuffed, I should think, with peachstones, and covered with small pieces of white and red cotton. On the table were three or four large Greek and Latin tables. These were the Fathers of the Church, and below as though hidden, I came upon Jocelin. He blushed. He was very attentive, [illegible] honours of his wretched lodgings without pride or false modesty. I suspected he had had a romantic story. I soon had a proof of it. In the Byzantine

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G. Fraipont. del

casket which he showed us there was a faded bouquet five or six years old at least. "Is that a relic?" I asked him. "No," he replied, with some agitation. "I do not know how it came there." Then he took the bouquet and slipped it carefully in his table drawer. Is that clear enough? I went back to the château saddened to have seen such poverty, but encouraged to bear my own, which, beside his, seemed of oriental opulence. You should have seen his surprise when Henry gave him twenty francs for a woman whom he had introduced to our notice! I really must make him a present. That straw armchair in which I sat is far too hard. I will give him one of those folding iron chairs like that which I took to Italy. You must choose me one, and send it to me as soon as possible.

Letter III

The same to the same.

Noirmoutiers, . . . *February,* 1845.

I certainly am not bored at Noirmoutiers. Besides, I have found an interesting occupation, and I owe it to my Abbé. He really knows everything, botany included. It reminds me of

Rousseau's *Letters* to hear the Latin name for a nasty onion I laid on the chimney-piece for want of a better place. "You know botany, then?" "Not very well," he replied; "just enough to teach the country folk the herbs which might be useful to them; just enough, I might say, to give a little interest to my solitary walks." I thought at once that it would be very amusing to gather pretty flowers in my walks, to dry them, and to arrange them in order in "my old Plutarch tied up with ribbons." "Do teach me botany," I said to him. He wished to wait until the spring, for there are no flowers at this bad time of the year. "But you have some dried flowers," I said; "I saw them at your house." I meant to refer to his tenderly preserved old bouquet. If you could have seen his face? . . . Poor wretched man! I pretty quickly repented of my indiscreet allusion. To make him forget it I hastened to tell him that one ought to have a collection of dried plants. This is called a *herbarium*. He agreed at once, and the very next day he brought me in a grey paper parcel several pretty plants, each with its own label. The course of botany had begun, and I made astonishing progress from the very first. But I had no idea botany was so immoral, or of the difficulty of the first explanations, above all

from a priest. You know, my dear, plants marry just as we do, but most of them have many husbands. One set is called phanerogams, if I have remembered the barbarous name properly. It is Greek, and means to marry openly at the town-hall. Then there are the cryptogams—those who marry secretly. The mushrooms that you eat marry in secret. All this is very shocking, but he did not come out of it so badly—better than I did, who had the silliness to shout with laughter, once or twice, at the most delicate passages. But I have become cautious now and I do not put any more questions.

Letter IV

The same to the same.

Noirmoutiers, . . . *February*, 1845.

You must be burning to hear the story of that preciously preserved bouquet; but, the fact is, I dare not ask him about it. In the first place it is more than probable that there is no story underneath; then, if there is one, perhaps it would be a story which he did not like to talk about. As for me, I am quite convinced that . . . but come, don't let us tell fibs! You know that I

can not keep any secrets from you. I know this story, and I will tell it you in a few words; nothing easier. "How did it come about, Monsieur l'Abbé," I said to him one day, "that with your brains and education you resigned yourself to be the curé of a little village?" He replied, with a sad smile: "It is easier to be the pastor of poor peasants than of townspeople. Everyone must cut his coat according to his cloth." "That is why," said I, "you ought to be in a better position." "I was once told," he went on, "that your uncle, the Bishop of N——, had deigned to notice me in order to offer me the curé of Sainte Marie; it is the best in the diocese. My old aunt, who is my only surviving relative, and who lives at N——, said that it was a very desirable position for me. But I am all right here, and I learnt with pleasure that the bishop had made another choice. What does it matter to me? Am I not happy at Noirmoutiers? If I can do a little good here it is my place; I ought not to leave it. Besides, town life reminds me. . . ." He stopped, his eyes became sad and dreamy, then, recovering himself suddenly, he said, "We are not working at our botany. . . ." I could not think any longer of the litter of old hay on the table, and I continued my questions. "When did you take orders?"

"Nine years ago." "Nine years . . . but surely you were then old enough to be established in a profession? I do not know, but I have always imagined it was not a youthful call which led you to the priesthood." "Alas! no," he said, in an ashamed manner; "but if my vocation came late, it was determined by causes . . . by a cause . . ." He became embarrassed and could not finish. As for me, I plucked up courage. "I will wager," I said, "that a certain bouquet which I have seen had some part in that determination." Hardly had the impertinent question escaped me than I could have bitten out my tongue rather than have uttered such a thing, but it was too late. "Why, yes, madam, that is true; I will tell you all about it, but not to-day—another time. The Angelus is about to ring." And he had left before the first stroke of the bell. I expected some terrible story. He came again the next day, and he himself took up the conversation of the previous day. He confessed to me that he had loved a young person of N——, but she had little fortune, and he, a student, had no other resources besides his wits. He said to her: "I am going to Paris, where I hope to obtain an opening; you will not forget me while I am working day and night to make myself worthy of you?" The young lady was

sixteen or seventeen years old, and was very sentimental. She gave him her bouquet as a token of faith. A year after he heard of her marriage with the lawyer of N—— just when he had obtained a professorship in a college. He was overwhelmed by the blow, and renounced the chair. He told me that during these years he could not think of anything else, and he seemed as much moved whilst reciting this simple love story as though it had only just happened. Then he took the bouquet out of his pocket. "It was childish of me to keep it," he said, "perhaps even it was wrong," and he threw it on the fire. When the poor flowers had finished crackling and blazing, he went on in a calmer voice: "I am grateful to you for having asked me to tell this story. I have to thank you for making me part with a souvenir which it is scarcely suitable I should keep." But his heart was full, and it was easy to see how much the sacrifice had cost him. Poor priests! what a life is theirs! They must forbid themselves the most innocent thoughts, and must banish from their hearts every feeling which makes the happiness of other men . . . even those recollections which are a part of life itself. Priests remind us of ourselves, of all unfortunate women to whom every living feeling is forbidden as criminal. We are allowed to suffer, but

even in that we must hide our pain. Good-bye, I reproach myself for my ill-advised curiosity, but it was indulged in on your behalf.

(We omit here several letters which do not contain any reference to the Abbé Aubain.)

Letter V

The same to the same.

Noirmoutiers, . . . *May*, 1845.

I have meant to write to you for a long time, my dear Sophie, but have always been kept back by a feeling of shame. What I want to tell you is so strange, so ridiculous and, withal, so sad, that I scarcely know whether you will be moved to tears or to laughter. I am still at a loss to understand it myself. But I will come to the facts without more beating about the bush. I have mentioned the Abbé Aubain to you several times in my previous letters: he is the curé of our village, Noirmoutiers. I also told you the story which led to his entering into the priesthood. Living away from everybody, and my mind full of those melancholy thoughts which you know trouble me, the companionship of a clever, cultivated and agreeable man was ex-

tremely congenial to me. Very likely I let him see that he interested me, for, in a very short time, he came to our house as though he were an old friend. I admit it was quite a novel pleasure to me to talk with a man of cultured mind. The ignorance of the world did but enhance his intellectual distinction. Perhaps, too—for I must tell you everything; I do not wish to hide from you any little failings of my character—perhaps, too, the naïveté of my coquetry (to use your own expression), for which you have often scolded me, has been at work unconsciously. I love to be pleasant to people who please me, and I want to be liked by those whom I like. . . . I see you open your eyes wide at this discourse, and I think I can hear you exclaim "Julie!" Don't be anxious; I am too old to be silly. But to continue. A degree of intimacy has sprung up between us without—let me hasten to say—anything either having been said or done inconsistent with his sacred calling. He is very happy in my society. We often talk of his earlier days, and more than once my evil genius has prompted me to bring up the subject of that romantic attachment which cost him a bouquet (now lying in ashes on my hearth) and the gloomy cassock he wears. It was not difficult to see that he thought of his faithless mistress

less often. One day he met her in the town, and even spoke to her. He told me all about it on his return, and added quite calmly that she was happy and had several charming children. He saw, by chance, some of Henry's fits of temper; hence ensued almost unavoidable confidences from my side, and on his increased sympathy. He understood my husband as though he had known him for a matter of ten years. Furthermore, his advice was as wise as yours, and more impartial, for you always hold that both sides are in the wrong. He always thinks I am in the right, but at the same time recommends prudence and tact. In short, he proves himself a devoted friend. There is something almost feminine about him which captivates me. His disposition reminds me of yours: it is great-minded and strong, sensitive and reserved, with an exaggerated sense of duty. . . . I jostle my words together one on top of the other in order to delay what I want to tell you. I can not speak openly; this paper frightens me. If only I had you in the fireside corner, with a little frame between us, embroidering the same piece of work! But at length, at length, Sophie, I must tell you the real truth. The poor fellow is in love with me. You may laugh, or perhaps you are shocked? I wish I could see you just now. He has not

of course said a word to me, but those large dark eyes of his can not lie. . . . At these words I believe you will laugh. What wonderful eyes those are which speak unconsciously! I have seen any number of men try to make theirs expressive who only managed to look idiotic. I must confess that my bad angel almost rejoiced at first over this unlucky state of things. To make a conquest—such a harmless conquest as this one—at my age! It is something to be able to excite such a feeling, such an impossible passion! . . . But shame on me! This vile feeling soon passed away. I said to myself I have done wrong to a worthy man by my thoughtless conduct. It is dreadful; I must put a stop to it immediately. I racked my brains to think how I could send him away. One day we were walking together on the beach at low tide; he did not dare to utter one word, and I was equally embarrassed. Five moments of deadly silence followed, during which I picked up shells to cover my confusion. At last I said to him, "My dear Abbé, you must certainly have a better living than this. I shall write to my uncle the bishop; I will go to see him if necessary." "Leave Noirmoutiers!" he exclaimed, clasping his hands. "But I am so happy here! What more can I desire while you are here? You have over-

whelmed me with good things, and my little house has become a palace." "No," I replied, "my uncle is very old; if I had the misfortune to lose him I should not know whom to address to obtain a suitable post." "Alas! madam, I should be very sorry to leave this village! . . . The curé de Sainte Marie is dead, . . . but I am not troubled, because I believe he will be replaced by the Abbé Raton, who is a most excellent priest. I am delighted with his appointment, for if Monseigneur had thought of me——"

"The curé de Sainte Marie is dead!" I cried. "I will go to my uncle at N—— to-day."

"Ah, madam, do nothing in the matter. The Abbé Raton is much better fitted for it than I; and, then, to leave Noirmoutiers! . . . ."

"Monsieur l'Abbé," I said resolutely, "you must!" At these words he lowered his head and did not venture to oppose. I nearly ran back to the château. He followed me a couple of paces behind, poor man, too much upset to open his mouth. He was quite crushed. I did not lose a minute. By eight o'clock I was at my uncle's house. I found him very much prejudiced in favour of his Raton; but he is fond of me, and I know my power. At length, after a long discussion, I got my way. Raton is cast aside, and

the Abbé Aubain is curé of Sainte Marie. He has been at the town for two days. The poor fellow understood my "You must." He thanked me seriously, but spoke of nothing beyond his gratitude. I am grateful to him for leaving Noirmoutiers so soon, and for telling me even that he was in haste to go and thank Monseigneur. He sent me at parting his pretty Byzantine casket, and asked permission to write to me sometimes. Ah, well, my dear. *Are you satisfied, Coucy?* This is a lesson which I shall not forget when I get back into the world. But then I shall be thirty-three, and shall hardly expect to be admired . . . and with such devotion as his! . . . Truly, that would be out of the question. Never mind, from the ruins of all this folly I save a pretty casket and a true friend. When I am forty, and a grandmother, I will plot to obtain the Abbé Aubain a living in Paris. Some day you will see this come to pass, my dear, and he will give your daughter her first communion.

Letter VI

The Abbé Aubain to the Abbé Bruneau, Professor of Theology at Saint A——.

N——, *May*, 1845.

My dear Professor,—It is the curé of Sainte Marie who is writing to you, not any longer the humble, officiating priest of Noirmoutiers. I have left my solitary marshes and behold me a citizen, installed in a fine living, in the best street in N——; curé of a large, well-built church, well kept up, of splendid architecture, depicted in every album in France. The first time that I said Mass before a marble altar, which glittered with gilding, I had to ask myself if I really were myself. But it is true enough, and one of my delights is the hope that at the next vacation you will come and pay me a visit. I shall have a comfortable room to offer you, and a good bed, not to mention some bordeaux, which I call my bordeaux of Noirmoutiers; and I venture to say it is worth your acceptance. But, you ask me, how did you get from Noirmoutiers

to Sainte Marie? You left me at the entrance to the nave, you find me now at the steeple.

O Melibœe deus nobis hæc otia fecit.

Providence, my dear Professor, sent a grand lady from Paris to Noirmoutiers. Misfortunes of a kind we shall never know had temporarily reduced them to an income of 10,000 crowns per annum. She is an agreeable and good woman, unfortunately a bit jaded by frivolous reading, and by association with the dandies of the capital. Bored to death by a husband with whom she has little in common, she did me the honour of becoming interested in me. There were endless presents and continual invitations, then every day some fresh scheme in which I was wanted. "M. l'Abbé, I want to learn Latin. . . . M. l'Abbé, I want to be taught botany." *Horresco referens*, did she not also desire that I should expound theology to her? What would you have, my dear Professor? In fact, to quench such thirst for knowledge would have required all the professors of Saint A——. Fortunately, such whims never last long: the course of studies rarely lasted beyond the third lesson. When I told her that the Latin for rose was *rosa,* she exclaimed, "What a well of learning you are, M. l'Abbé! How could you allow yourself to

be buried at Noirmoutiers?" To tell you the truth, my dear Professor, the good lady, through reading the silly books that are produced nowadays, got all sorts of queer ideas into her head. One day she lent me a book which she had just received from Paris, and which enraptured her. *Abélard,* by M. de Rémusat. Doubtless you have read it, and admired the learned research made by the author, unfortunately in so wrong a spirit. At first I skipped to the second volume, containing the "Philosophy of Abélard," and, after reading that with the greatest interest, I returned to the first, to the life of the great heresiarch. This, of course, was all madam had deigned to read. That, my dear Professor, opened my eyes. I realised that there was danger in the society of fine ladies enamoured of learning. This one of Noirmoutiers could give points to Héloïse in the matter of infatuation. This, to me, extremely novel situation was troubling me much, when, suddenly, she said to me, "M. l'Abbé, the incumbent of Sainte Marie is dead, and I want you to have the living. *You must.*" Immediately she drove off in her carriage to see Monseigneur; and, a few days later, I was curé of Sainte Marie, somewhat ashamed of having obtained the living by favour, but in other respects delighted to be far away from

the toils of a *lioness* of the capital. A lioness, my dear Professor, is the Parisian expression for a woman of fashion.

Ω Ζεῦ, γυναικῶν οἷον ὤπασας γένος.*

Ought I to have rejected this good fortune in order to defy the temptation? What nonsense! Did not St. Thomas of Canterbury accept castles from Henry II.? Good-bye, my dear Professor, I look forward to discussing philosophy with you in a few months' time, each of us in a comfortable armchair, before a plump chicken and a bottle of bordeaux, *more philosophorum. Vae let me ama.*

* A line taken, I believe, from the *Seven Against Thebes*, of Æschylus, "O Jupiter! women! . . . what a race thou hast given us!" The Abbé Aubain and his Professor, the Abbé Bruneau, are good classical scholars.

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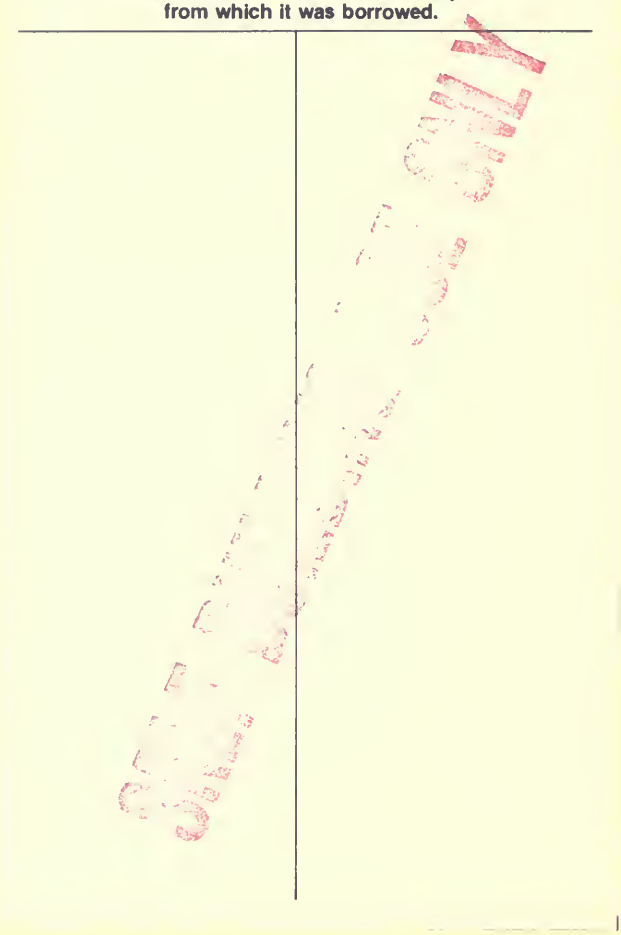

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